THE LONDON
APHRODITE

edited by Jack Lindsay and P. R. Stephensen

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DAPHNE

ESSAY ON THE NECESSITY OF A NEW OUTLOOK IN LANDSCAPE PAINTING WITH SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR HER UNCOFFINING

(For Elioth Gruner)

I

Ever since Apollo's desire found root in the ground
And a girl's thigh took the curve of the wind in a tree,
Landscape painters have been trying to perceive
The tree's bright sap of femininity,
Undo the bunched leaves tied up with ribbon-light,
Or from the shawls of moonlight lift two breasts
Of hardy beauty.

Of course I understood
The philosophic explanation,
But still it cannot be denied
That it's irritating
To have your sweetheart shocked to wood.
Daphne was walking to meet me
(In her new Coan chemise
So very transparent it looked like
The wind itself flowing off from her:
Flimsy wind fastened to her nipples)
When Apollo saw her come
Through gladed sunlight to
The shade of my kisses. He
Frightened her by talking over her head,
And lost her for herself and me.

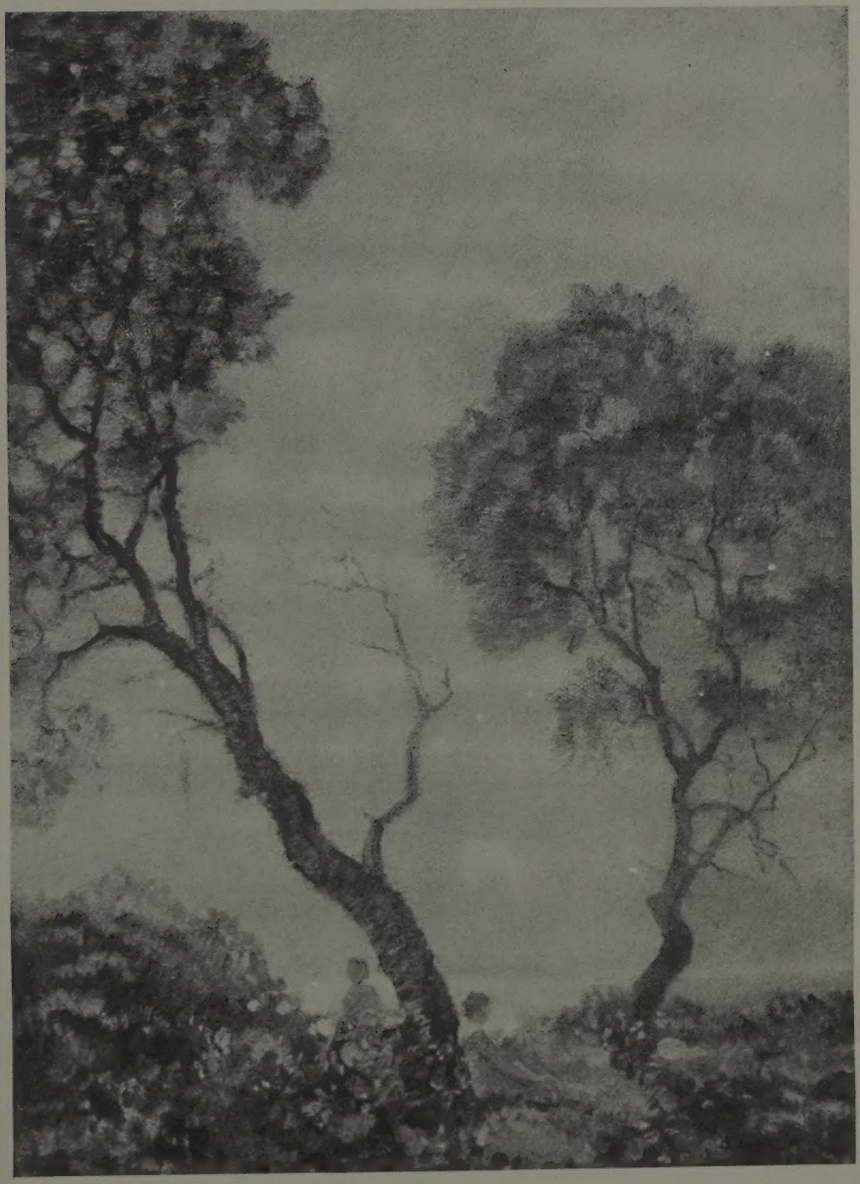
II

In sunlight slabbed with sheep I lay—
No bird was crawling on the sky.
There was no sound save light's soft tresses
Being brushed out by wind and
Water that zany mumbling by.

No wing of siren gleamed
In sharp-edged colour through
The air's dead fiery hue.
No fin of danger slit
The mind's pale sea.
Daphne, I waited for you,
But you never came to me.

III

Daphne was gathering daisies
In her lap, she had
Twenty daisies and some clover
Gathered all for me her lover
Me her pretty lad.



MORNING SHEEN

from a painting by Elioth Gruner

Daphne was gathering kisses
In her thought, she told me:
I catch each kiss on lawns where flowers
Are nipples milked for colour by
Young girls with crystal pails.
They pour it out in showers
Over the morning sky;
That's how night fails.
It is our kisses that drive out
Tatterdemalion Night.
Flowers have little breasts where spouts
Beauty the milk of light;
Didn't you know that? O goodness,
I thought you knew everything.

I love you: I answered, and suddenly
All the birds began to sing.

IV

Another thing that Daphne knew
(I didn't. Did you?)
Was that the stars were really only
Cockle-shells of fire
Sticking to the hull of night, and when
One grows so old that it can't hold
It comes off; haven't you seen them?

But when I wanted her to declare
How the hulled night first got there
Anchored over the placid earth,
Barnacled with stars, she said:
What does it matter, isn't it enough
To know that stars are cockle-shells
When they might easily be
Fireflies or bells of flame
Cathedraled in eternity?
And if they aren't cockle-shells what are they?
That floored me.

V

But why did she run from Apollo, why did the silly one run,
Then suddenly clot in whirling colour on to the branching sun?
That ever Apollo might seek a tryst with this girl lolling boldly unkisst,
Still saying Nay Nay.

For in the cavernous light of curving flowers Apollo ever must go
While she, glassed silkily in earth's parting veils, shall show
How Beauty's limbs into one lapse of breaking kisses grow—
Then vanish away.

VI

VENUS was schoolmistress. She wore spectacles to look the part.
Daphne and I sat at the same desk,
Cutting initials on the seat and doing sums
Of most complicated kisses.

Venus was talking:

Zeus said to me this morning as I lay in bed:
You're not attending to your duty.
I said: I am, I had three lovers last night,
These clouds on which I lie
Are wearing out, their gloss is rubbed,
I think I'll repaper the sky.
He said that I was trying to change the subject.
I wasn't, was I? I've only two elbows, why
Do the clouds get so frayed and shabby?
Not that I care;
Any kiss can hammock me
In birdnest moons of down.

But Zeus kept looking at me with a frown,
And the lecture he gave me will serve us for a lesson.
Titian, stop fidgeting. No skylarking, Turner.
And Gruner, don't look so sarcastic, listen to me.

Poetry's running short of material, it seems,
Though why I don't know as I'm always ready to be kissed.
There's a shortage in Spectacular Dreams;
No god's seduced a country-girl
For several years now.
People are tired of reading about nothing
But Divorces on Incompatibility of Tastes;
Girls now no more expect Apollo in the haycock
Or in the henroost Pan
To make a silence flash across
Their senses, a bladed silence
Now to knock them down.
This must be remedied and girls once more
Never know when a clout of music on the head
Will stretch them on a floor or on a bed
For a poem to take their virginity.
It's clear that unless a girl is ravished at an early age
By some trill of drilling laughter, some quick tremolo of the senses,
She's no use to life at all,
Fit only for stenography or an onanistic marriage.
For as we can only fornicate with an image,
Then it's clear that if we're scared to watch
Anticked beauty in the mirror of the wardrobe
Or of poetry, the image is still-born.
We flounder against flat loins of wombless darkness, seeking
To mine through the body's lapidescent senses

Not into heaven's flocking flowers but into Nirvana
That pit of terror in the lumbar ganglia.

How shall we give to man a simple doll of beauty
To sit astride his dreams and cosset him with laughter?
How shall we teach the sylphs sidling through kisses,
Walking through love-affairs as others walk
Through adjoining rooms, a suite of embraces,
For ever crossing the threshold of a kiss,
Puzzled a little when they wake up in the morning
And find they went home with the wrong man—
No that's untrue, they don't need to be taught anything,
But I couldn't help dragging them in,
I'm wandering from the subject, what I mean to say is,
Zeus considers
Earth is getting too ramshackle, the trees he says
Lollop about like fat women with their stays off.
He wants corsets of beauty put upon the trees,
He wants the furbelows of light sewn on coquettishly.
These bumpkin trees must be taught the manners of beauty
And fêtes of laughter on lawns of swimming statues
Raise trees like booths of colour, have the trees
Pedestaled with shadows of bronzen flowers
Like monumental casts of fire and stone;
And all the saplings parasoled with the sky
And melting through the wind.
This is the earth of lovers hidden from all others,
Like flame inside a jewel; all hands but those of lovers
Shall find a blank frigidity of air
Jar on their tips, the undiminished flame
Burn on no more touched than is a star
By any breath that tries to puff it out.
Keep breath to cool porridge, not to extinguish stars.
But lovers shall walk inside the jeweled flame,
The rigid walls that others cannot pass
Dissolve like kisses, and they be within
The immense secrecy of rubiginous peace,
Within the petaled heart of flaking stone,
Treading down the sopping silence like warm asphodel;
And there the trees are shaped of pliable fire
Branching through beauty, hot with dabs of fruit:
Cameos cut upon the brittle sky,
Or the sky the merest muslin clothing them.
This is the land of lovers closed in gems,
There glows the palette of fire's trees.

VII

To-day I saw a picture
Daphne-trees archly posed
To catch the eyes. O whorish trees
I recognised at once
Daphne's shoulder shrugged through light
Of disappearing silk.

So, painter, after all these years
Of chiton, toga, hose, pantaloon, and pants,
Daphne I discover
In this bourdel of posturing trees.
I who was her lover
Do Daphne spy.
And as my girl seemed always
Her dream-self stepping out of
The skirts of her fading flesh,
So all these trees
Are glazed with the sky.

[*January*, 1926.]

TWO SONNETS

by ALDOUS HUXLEY

THE PERGOLA

Pillars, round which the wooden serpents clamber
Towards their own leaves, support the emerald shade,
The eyes, the amethysts, the clustered amber,
That weave the ceiling of this colonnade.
How many thousand Tyrrhenian Septembers
Muskily ripen in a sun-warmed skin!
With all my autumns! for this tongue remembers
Grapes that made sweet a sick child's medicine,
Grapes of the South and of the submarine
Dusk of an English hot-house. But when night
Lids every shining glance of sky between
Leaves now extinct, groping, bereft of sight,
I reach for grapes, but from an inward vine
Pluck sea-cold nipples still bedewed with brine.

SHEEP

Seeing a country churchyard, when the grey
Monuments walked, I with a second glance,
Doubting, postponed the apparent judgment day
To watch instead the random slow advance
Over the down of a hundred nibbling sheep.
And yet these tombs, half fancied and half seen
In the dim world between waking and sleep,
These headstones browsing on their plat of green,
Were sheep indeed and emblems of all life.
For man to dust, dust turns to grass and grass
Grows wool and feeds on grass. The butcher's knife
Works magic, and the ephemeral sheep-forms pass
Through swift tombs and through silent tombs, until
Once more God's acre feeds across the hill.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS*

SCENARIO FOR BALLET AND CINEMA FOUNDED ON THE WORKS OF WILLIAM HOGARTH

by ROBERT NICHOLS

THE conductor takes his stand.
The lights die down.
The conductor raises his baton for the Orchestral Prelude.

ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE

Darkness. Sudden shattering eruption of furious laughter, full of ferocious and brutal *bonhomie*. It begins with a discordant whinny and develops into an uproarious fantasia and cascade of hiccups, catcalls, belches, thumpings, whackings, general uproariousness. One feels at once that it accepts things, there is nothing of the underground revolutionary quality in it that characterises the opening to the overture of *Figaro*. It does not among the foundations laugh at the edifice of society. Its cruelty is the cruelty of bodily robustiousness rather than of the mind. And there is no disgust in it; rather an animal appetite for life so huge as to include and penetrate and accept and absorb all aspects of social existence (save the spiritual), yes, even the disasters that attend the abuse of a strict morality, those disasters being accepted as only the culminate and most intense phase of that chain of cause-and-effect which delights Hogarth and through which he perceived most clearly what is continual in the rythmic hurly-burly of the dance of life. As suddenly and inexplicably as it had risen, the uproar passes.

Bow Bells subduedly chime and are answered more subduedly yet by other bells and by uneasy murmurs. The City turns over and goes to sleep again. . . . Silence. The deadest hour before the dawn, when the old houses, battered by the tempestous tide of life that at all hours, save this, eddies through them, sink drowsing a little beneath the one star palpitant in the peacock-blue of heaven. From all over the countryside, which hems in this Eighteenth-Century London, floats the crying of cocks. From within an inn yard, somewhere close at hand, the imprisoned game-cocks reply. A ballad singer is heard singing a snatch in a throaty voice. The curtain ascends.

THE SCENE

We are looking at a cobbled space in the midst of Hogarth's London. On our left is an alley named *Beer Street* as we know from the placard in the wall of the inn which forms its corner. This inn has bow windows on both floors. Beyond the bow windows, under the inn sign, steps leading up into the inn. Beyond the steps an alley, marked *Gin Lane*, and in the further side of this alley a pawnbroker's, with steps going down into a basement and over the steps the words *Blood Bowl House*. Further houses beyond. At the back a mellow brick wall. Over the wall a signpost marked TO TYBURN

On our right a mansion with steps up. Next door another

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mansion with similar steps and with a balcony above and over the steps extinguishers for link boys' torches. Beyond the second mansion a narrow but clean and bright street named *Fashion Row* as we see by the placard in the wall of the gloomy courthouse beyond it. Over the courthouse can be seen one of Wren's spires. At the back the mellow brick wall again.

In the foreground on the right a group of vagrants have gathered about a glow. . . .

SCENARIO

(1) The vagrants shift uneasily, the wind softly whines, the sign over the inn creaks.

(2) A loud rat-a-tat on many knockers, boisterous shoutings, laughter from side streets. A street musician, uttering an agitated squealing on his hautboy, runs in pointing. All the vagrants, except a peg-legged sailor, scatter.

(3) The Mohoks enter, ratat on knockers, wrench them off. Indignant night-capped heads pop out above and then quickly pop back.

(4) The Marchioness sedately carried in her sedan, with link boys running before and behind, is turned upside down and left kicking. The Mohoks run on.

(5) The Watch appears, headed by the Beadle bearing a lanthorn on a pole. His assistants right the Marchioness and escort her to the second house on the left and, as they do so, are harassed by reappearing Mohoks.

(6) The Mohoks knock the Beadle's hat over his eyes, spin him round while he strikes out at them with his pole, then scatter and disappear. The Beadle reels into the door under the pawnbroker's. The casement above flies open: a chamber-pot is emptied on the Beadle's head. His lanthorn is extinguished. He splutters, then blunders across toward the peg-legged sailor. The sailor turns, gives him one glance, pulls a cudgel from under arm, cracks the Beadle over the head with it and with never another glance resumes the warming of his hands. The Beadle blunders out into the midst of the cobbled space, then, seeing a formidable old gentleman in a night cap slowly taking aim at him with a blunderbuss from one of the upper windows of the inn, incontinently flies up Fashion Row. It is getting lighter.

(7) The vagrants come hopping back. The glow of the fire is all but gone. They drowse a moment. We distinguish, beside the sailor, a blind man (with a long patch guarding both eyes, a cup, and, slung round his neck, that sort of early string hurdy-gurdy known in France as a *vielle*), a gaunt red-nosed ballad singer, a beggar with a violin, a starveling, etc. The far off cocks are heard crowing. Abruptly the sailor scatters the embers with his peg-leg. Expostulations. The glow entirely disappears. The vagrants execute a brief measure to get the stiffness out of their limbs.

(8) The ballad singer turns and in a throaty voice sings a refrain up at the balcony of the second mansion on the left. The far off howling of a dog replies. The beggar with the violin plays an ironical flourish. The sailor hops away up Beer Street in a disgusted hornpipe. Blast of a country stag's horn. Sunrise goldenly brightens amid barking of dogs and far off

street cries. All the vagrants save the ballad singer disperse. The tootle of the postilion's horn is heard again. It is blown by someone evidently a little short of breath and rather tipsy, and denotes that the country stage has arrived in the courtyard of the inn. Two or three puffs of a delicious breeze from the fields about London blow up the street and

(9) The window on to the balcony opens and the Beauty, in a becoming night bonnet and elaborate negligee, steps forth to greet the Sun, and to wonder what it will bring her.

Meanwhile the Country Girl (later the Harlot) enters from Gin Lane and stands at a loss. The Country Parson enters pestered by a drunken ostler carrying the horn we heard earlier. The Procuress, emerging from the Blood Bowl, draws the attention of the Quack who is with her to the Country Girl. The drunken ostler, having drawn nothing from the Parson's pocket, staggers over toward Beer Street to welcome the Rake with a mandlin tootle.

(10) The Rake enters followed by a lawyer. The Rake advances, looks round. The sun bursts forth in glory. All the cocks crow gloriously together and then are suddenly silent. The Beauty courtesies to the sun. The Rake, a young country gentleman with traces of the hobbledehoy, gapes. The Beauty sees him and is amused at the way he is taken with her. Lightly she picks a rose from her wall and tosses it toward him. The Rake advances, picks it up, takes off his hat, would greet her, throws her an impassioned glance. Their eyes meet. That is quite another matter; she looks him up and down disdainfully, turns with an air of calculated disgust, and enters her room. Mohoks irrupt from Gin Lane. They point at the Rake. Some laughter from the Mohoks, from two or three at the opening of Gin Lane and from beggars on the stairs of the Blood Bowl.

(11) The pettifogging Steward comes bustling out of the first mansion on the right. He welcomes the Rake, conducts him, pestered by beggars as they go, toward the house, for the ostler has already told the beggars who the Rake is. The Rake enters the house.

(12) The Procuress introduces herself to the Country Girl. The Country Girl is distrustful but vaguely grateful. The Procuress goes to the Parson and attempts to get him to take an unpriestly interest in the Country Girl. Horror of the Parson.

Meanwhile sundry hawkers, etc., have entered headed by the Shrimp Girl. They make their way through crying their cries (Coal, Dust, Lavender, etc.). The Shrimp Girl warns the Country Girl against the Procuress.

(13) The upper windows of the Rake's house shoot up and the Rake is seen laughing and making as if to toss guineas to the beggars below. The Country Girl looks up, sees the Rake, gapes. The Rake blows her a casual airy kiss and throws a little handful of guineas to the beggars. The guineas describe arcs, the beggars chase them.

(14) The Rake emerges. No sooner is he coming down the steps than there appear from different directions a dancing master, a teacher of the flute, a French fencing master, an English master of the quarter staff, a bravo. All compete for the Rake's

interest. The Rake signs for one at a time. The dancing master points his toe and flourishes his handkerchief till cracked on the head by the flute of the flautist, who in turn makes haste to avoid the passados of the fencing master, who in turn is driven away by the flourishes of the master of the quarter staff. Then they all close in on him and he gives them each a guinea. But they demand more. At this moment the bravo arrives and, pushing them all aside, displays his letter of commendation as one disposed to undertake all kinds of service. The Rake points to his persecuters. The bravo drives them out. No sooner is the bravo driving these creatures before him than a herd of others come running—a jockey, a gamecock fancier, a peruke-maker. The jockey prances in front of him, riding a bridle he has in his hands over imaginary jumps and belabouring an imaginary horse with his switch. But suddenly over the jockey's head the gamecock fancier arrives carrying two baskets of cocks. He flings the basket on one side and, pulling the jockey's cap over the jockey's nose, squats down on his heels and springs at the jockey like a gamecock. Twice or three times the pair spring at each other as if they were cocks in a main, then the fancier bowls over the jockey, stands up and crows. The Rake, delighted, gives him a guinea. The fancier holds up his baskets, but at this moment the perukier, running with a pole from which depend a variety of wigs, claps a huge periwig on the fancier's head and temporarily blinds him. Before the Rake gathers what is happening the perukier is dancing behind him putting periwigs on and off, while his assistant, a monkey in full costume, dances round in front holding up a mirror. The fancier has just sent the monkey scampering when a tailor, still stitching at a coat, runs up with his apprentice who is unbuttoning a new long golden waistcoat. They rush up to the Rake and tear his coat and waistcoat from him while he endeavours to attend to the fancier. The tailor and his apprentice thrust the Rake into his new coat and waistcoat. The fancier pulls a cock from his basket. It crows. The Rake, highly pleased with himself in his new garments, seizes the cock, pulls a feather from its tail, shoves the cockade into the three-cornered hat which the perukier offers him, thrusts the fancier away, and, flapping his sleeves like a cock, crows louder than the cocks in the basket. The Beauty, now in full toilette, appears on the balcony. The Procuress endeavours to win the ear of the Country Girl who is shyly looking at the Rake.

(15) The Rake scatters largesse. Mohoks rush in, watch him with amusement and amaze. The Rake bows elaborately to the Beauty in the balcony. She appears disdainful but flattered. He perceives the impression he has created, shrugs his shoulders and makes as if to turn away. She laughs and throws him a careless kiss. He has hardly picked it up when he hears a shriek behind him. The Mohoks have seized the Country Girl and are endeavouring to rush her into the inn. She calls to the Rake. The Rake rescues her. He glances up at the Beauty as if expecting admiration. The Beauty tosses her head. The Country Girl, to his great embarassment, sinks in a courtesy, kisses his hands. The Beauty on the balcony becomes more

disdainful than ever. Every flicker of her fan or turn of her head says "How vulgar!"

Meanwhile the fancier has whispered in the ear of the Mohok chief. The Mohok chief, supported by his followers, advances, assures the Rake it has all been just their high spirits, rallies him on his courage and invites him to enter the inn that they may drink his health. One after another the Mohoks bow. His progress to the inn is quite a triumph. . . .

As he goes, the Widow appears from Ladies Walk attended by her black page. With greedy eyes she watches him depart.

(16) On the top of the inn steps the Rake turns, invites his new friends in as his guests. The Mohok chief indicates to the Quack that he is going to fleece the Rake. The Mohok chief insists on borrowing a few guineas from the leather pouch of the Steward who has pursued his master with expostulations. He assures the Steward that all will be well. Then he sends the Steward reeling. The Steward returns to the Rake's house, counting his coins, casting up his eyes and dolorously shaking his head.

Meanwhile the Beauty, who has been watching from behind her fan, leans out over the balcony and, despite the Parson, who alternately takes snuff and warns her, stretches out her arms after the Rake and the Country Girl, who, likewise disregarding the Parson, flits across to the door of the inn and waits and listens.

(17) Uproar of toasts in the inn. The Quack toddles back to the Procuress who is alternately glancing at the Country Girl and the Beauty. The Quack shows the guinea and puts his finger to his nose. The Procuress, indicating the Girl and the Beauty, does the same. Then she whispers to the Quack. Both disappear down the stairs to the Blood Bowl.

(18) The Earl appears, very elegant with a long white cane, from Fashion Row. He pays his addresses to the balcony, but does not at first get much response. At length the Beauty stretches out her hand and seems about to throw him a rose when the Rake is heard crowing like a cock in the inn. Abruptly she changes her mind and enters her room. The Procuress reappears and approaches the Earl with a view to interesting him in the Country Girl. The Earl contemptuously dismisses her and glances at the balcony. The Procuress nods her head understandingly.

(19) Riot in the inn. The Rake, flushed with wine, emerges from the inn for more money.

The Beauty appears on the steps of her house, runs across and is about to stay him when the Marchioness hurries out of the house and tries to herd the Beauty back again. But the Beauty runs round and round the Marchioness and tries to stay the Rake—but in vain. He laughs it off. The Beauty is herded back into the house.

The Procuress has whispered to the Country Girl that the Beauty will take him. As if in confirmation of this, the Beauty appears stealthily on the balcony and hides behind the window door to her room as the Marchioness looks for her. The Marchioness goes in again.

(20) This has considerable effect on the Country Girl. The

Shrimp Girl, wandering by again, signs to the Country Girl to leave the Procuress. But the Country Girl has no eyes for the Shrimp Girl. The Procuress indicates the Beauty's finery. The Country Girl sorrowfully surveys her own poor apparel. The Procuress signs to the Quack who is waiting in the stairs of the Blood Bowl. He approaches with a cloak, a corset and a hat. The Procuress slips off one of her petticoats. In the twinkling of an eye the Country Girl's apparel is transformed. The Procuress, dancing before her, at once dries the Country Girl's tears, pomades her cheeks, places a patch in position and, taking her by both hands, instructs her how to walk. Having instructed her in this, she instructs her how to smile with her head first on one side, then on the other. Then, taking her by one hand, she instructs her how to dance a few steps. She urges her to pull up her dress a little which the Country Girl doesn't want to do. The Procuress tries to laugh her into it, then whispers to her. Suddenly the Country Girl, laughing, lifts her dress very high indeed and at this moment

(21) The Rake emerges from his house. Instantly the Procuress withdraws, the Country Girl dances up to the Rake, coquets with him, lifts her dress and dances him away into the inn. The Beauty leaves the balcony. The ground floor bow of the inn window flies up. Heads of Mohoks pop out and look up. Whistles of astonishment and amusement.

(22) The Beauty runs over to the inn. Coarse laughter from within. Toasts. A Mohok disguised as a parson leans backward out of the window and blesses those above. A corset comes flying out of the upstairs window. Laughter of the gamblers. A trollop rushes forward and tries to make off with the corset. A beggar with a wooden peg instead of a right leg and a hook interferes. Another beggar with a wooden peg instead of a left leg and with a hook hooks the first beggar's hook. They spin round trying to kick each other with the wooden legs. The Procuress hands the corset to the Quack. A beggar without any legs at all, seated on a little trolley, scoots through the pair upsetting them and makes off with the corset, which is in turn snatched from him by the Procuress as he goes by. There is a general melee of beggars during which the Beauty, with her fingers in her ears, runs into her house. The Earl, emerging from Fashion Row, sees her enter and follows. The door is slammed in his face.

(23) Bow Bells sound noon. The Rake emerges from the inn pestered by the Country Girl who now wants him to go to church with her. He has had his pleasure and rejects her. She becomes importunate, appeals to neighbours. Trollops and neighbours abuse her, while the Mohoks lean out of the windows roaring with laughter. The Rake rushes to his house and shouts up at the windows. The Steward's head appears. He refuses to come down, to pay for such little mishaps. The crowd boos. Frightened, he withdraws his head. The Rake rushes into the house, brings out the Steward by the ear and rifles his pouch of its last money bag. The crowd cheers. The Steward in a panic flies back into the house. The Rake offers the Country Girl money. The trollops and neighbours urge her

to take it. She refuses it, then takes the money bag from him, scatters it among the crowd, strikes him across the face with the empty bag and rushes off. The Procuress nods to the Quack and both follow her. (When next she appears, she is the Harlot.)

(24) The Widow with her black page boy wags a roguishly admonishing finger at the Rake. He brushes her aside and goes to pay his addresses to the empty balcony. No one there. He must attract her attention.

(25) He turns out his pockets. They are as empty as the balcony. He attempts to borrow a guinea off the chief Mohok who is counting guineas out of one hand into the other. The Mohok chief swears he has no money. The Steward appears with a spike of bills in one hand and one receipt in the other. The Rake scatters the bills and demands a guinea. The Steward shows him an empty pouch. The Rake, enraged, takes the Steward and shakes him upside down. A private little hoard of guineas, stolen from the Rake, falls out. The Rake places the Steward right side up and runs round in a circle after him, kicking him. Meanwhile the crowd snaps up the rolling guineas. The Marchioness appears on the steps of her house (which is also the Beauty's). The Rake sees the starveling pick up a guinea and pursues. The crowd scatters. The Marchioness's sedan is waiting in front of her house. Before the attendants realise who has entered, the starveling has jumped in and bidden them move on up Gin Lane. The agitated Marchioness pursues.

(26) The Rake takes a penny from the Blind Beggar's cup. The Blind Man sees too late what is happening but, as the Parson appears from Ladies Walk, pretends to be blind once more and shakes his empty cup. The Parson fishes out a coin and places it in the cup. The Rake steals the coin. The Blind Man shakes his empty cup at the Parson again. The Parson, annoyed, gives him another coin. This time the Blind Beggar prevents the Rake getting it and tells the Rake to borrow off the Parson. The Rake attempts to do so. The Parson is sorry, but he has given his last. The Rake shrugs; the Parson toddles off.

(27) The Rake casts first one coin then the other up at the Beauty's window. No result. The Shrimp Girl, passing, picks up the coins and restores them to the Blind Beggar. The Rake makes for the inn. The Steward intervenes, expostulates, explains there is no more money. If the Rake loses any more the Rake's house and its contents will have to be sold. Happy idea! cries the Rake and, summoning some beggars, bids them enter his house and carry over the furniture to the pawnbroker's. The Beggars overwhelm the Steward and rush into the house. The Rake enters the inn.

(28) The Beauty, emerging on to the balcony, sees him enter the inn. The Earl enters with the Parson, bows respectfully, but is ignored, for the bow window of the inn is suddenly flung up and the Rake hails a procession of strolling players who emerge into the cobbled space from Ladies Walk. The strollers hesitate, then, seeing the Rake hold up a bottle amid a popping of corks and shouts from the Mohoks within, enter the inn, being ushered in by the publican, a little drunk himself. The window slams down as the Beauty leaves her balcony.

(29) The Beauty steals across to the side of the bow window followed at a respectful distance by the Earl and the Parson. She listens, full of anguish. Suddenly the window is flung up and a dishevelled actress dressed as Diana and extremely tipsy leans out to rant her part. The Rake, tipsy too, casts his arm round her neck, attempts to fondle her bosom, while a drunken negro in green and gold appears on the inn steps pouring wine on the head of a bald and burly ruffian and trying to rub it in as if it were a lotion. The actress leers at the Rake, then, leaning out of the window, summons all neighbouring trollops. They appear out of Blood Bowl House led by the Harlot. The window slams down. The trollops rush into the inn.

The Beauty draws herself up. The Earl appears before her, bows. She accepts his hand. A snatch of organ music is heard from the church. They proceed toward the church. The Marchioness reappears in her sedan, steps out, sees the Beauty proceeding toward the church with somebody whose back she does not know, fears it is the Rake, rushes after, discovers her mistake, is delighted and makes the tail of the procession. The Widow appears, watches the procession with satisfaction.

(30) The beggars come bustling out of the house carrying furniture. At the same time creditors—including the tailor, the perukier, etc.—rush up headed by the Beadle. Expostulations. The Widow crosses to the door of the inn. Riot between beggars and creditors. The wedding bells add their clangour.

(31) The inn window flies up. The Rake in a furious rage leaps out bringing with him the publican, the actress and the Mohok chief, who are all trying to get money out of him. He sends them reeling. He is promptly pursued by the Widow. Meanwhile the creditors have got the best of it and each creditor is herding a beggar who carries a piece of furniture before him. The tailor, at the end of the procession, bows, hands the Rake a receipt. On the steps of the Rake's house an auctioneer, surrounded by a little crowd, prominent among which is the Mohok chief, is rapping with his hammer and putting the house up to auction. The Rake, beside himself with rage, raises hands to heaven. The Widow's black page bows before him, offers him a note. He tears it open, looks up, sees the Widow curtsying before him. He accepts her, then raises his hand. The beggars run the furniture back into the house, knocking over the auctioneer and dispersing the crowd as they do so.

(32) The Rake and the Widow proceed toward the church. They meet the Earl and the Beauty returning. Clangour of ironical wedding bells. The Rake and the Beauty look back at one another. The Earl and the Beauty enter the Beauty's house. The Marchioness is carried off in her sedan.

(33) Brief ironical wedding dance of beggars, theatrical troupe, etc.

(34) This culminates in the return of the Widow and the Rake from the church. The beggars form a mock procession and conduct the pair to the Rake's house. The Mohoks signal to the Rake. On the steps of his house, the Rake hangs back,

then pushes the Widow in and locks the door. Roars of laughter as the Rake rushes, surrounded by Mohoks, toward the inn.

(35) An upper window in the Rake's house is flung up and the Widow in a nightcap appears, frantically waving. The Rake turns on the steps of the inn, blows her a kiss and vanishes within doors. The crowd laughs and disperses. Only the ballad singer and the peg-legged sailor are left. The Widow signals an invitation to the ballad singer. He shakes his head. The Widow produces a bag of gold. The peg-legged sailor sees it and, striking the ballad singer out of the way, blows kisses to the Widow and swarms up the house front and into her room. The window slams down. The ballad singer sings a snatch of romantic refrain and makes off up Ladies Walk.

(36) The Rake, amid a shower of cards, darts out of the inn and across to his house. He hammers on the door. The peg-legged sailor, in his shirt, appears at the upper window. The Rake displays his empty pockets. The sailor throws down an empty gold bag. The Rake hammers on the door again. The sailor reaches back into the room, produces his wooden peg and flourishes it threateningly at the Rake.

(37) The Rake, pulling off his coat, rushes into the pawnbroker's. The Harlot appears on the steps leading down into Blood Bowl House. The Beauty appears in négligée on the balcony, holding a candle.

(38) The Rake, emerging, money in hand from the pawnbroker's, catches sight of the Beauty. The Beauty signals that the Earl is asleep. The Rake and the Beauty agree to fly. The wind blows from the fields.

(39) The Beauty vanishes within. The Harlot, flinging her cloak about her head, runs across to the corner of the courthouse and Fashion Row. The Beauty, dressed for travelling, runs out, and as she runs out the Harlot runs in. Mohoks come tumbling out of the inn.

The Rake and the Beauty confer a moment. They turn to fly. The Earl, followed by the Harlot, rushes from the house sword in hand, without coat or waistcoat. He attempts to bar the way. The Rake snatches the Earl's sword from its scabbard and runs him through. The Earl spins slowly round and falls.

The Rake stands a moment dazed while the Mohoks run away. The Harlot attempts to drag the Rake down the stairs of Blood Bowl House. The Beauty tries to drag him in flight. The watch, headed by the Beadle, rush in. The dying Earl points to the sword in the Rake's hand, then, rising on one knee, blows a slow kiss to the Beauty and falls back dead. The Marchioness arrives in her sedan. The Rake is arrested and hustled into the courthouse. The Beauty, pursued by the furious Marchioness, flies into her house.

(40) A small crowd gathers. Two or three Mohoks leave the inn and join the crowd. The bald burly ruffian who had fallen asleep by the inn steps wakes up and crosses to the scene of the murder. He stoops down, dabbles his finger in the (imaginary) gore, summons two wastrels from Gin Street who appear with an enormous mallet and a saw, and sends them on

their way via Gin Street. He then goes to the pawnshop and emerges with a rope. He goes to the courthouse, tightening the noose as the crowd, groaning, makes way for him. He is about to enter when——

(41) The Beadle, acting as town crier, appears on the steps, rings a bell and puts on owlish spectacles. As he is putting on the spectacles the gibbet passes along on the further side of the wall. The Beadle produces a huge roll of paper. He then bawls the sentence, which is punctuated with sounds of the hammering at the gibbet somewhere behind. The Beadle, taking off his spectacles, takes up his staff of office and walks pompously down the steps. The hangman skips in front of him whirling his noose.

(42) The first part of the procession to the gallows commences. The perukier's monkey dashes forward throwing somersaults. The hangman comes next. After him the Beadle. Then two soldier boys with fife and kettledrums. Next the Rake, followed by the Lawyer, the Parson, etc.

In the middle of the cobbled space the Rake halts. The crowd boos him. The windows of the inn are crowded with Mohoks. The Rake takes off his hat and holds it at vertical arm's length. Then he fishes a pack of cards from his pocket and with a superb gesture hurls them in a circle across the sky. The Mohoks clap their hands. The Rake sweeps them a bow and still holds his hat high while he passes in the procession up Gin Lane.

(43) The Widow appears on the steps of the Rake's house, learns what has happened, has the vapours and is carried in while the peg-legged sailor hastily makes off to the inn.

The Beauty appears on the balcony, mask in hand.

(44) The Rake, seen over the wall at the back, passes by in a tumbril amid pikes, etc., his coffin behind him, the Parson with him admonishing him. His hat is on one side of his head, his arms are folded. Uproar of crowd, over which can be heard the squeal of the pipe and rattle of the kettledrum, punctuated by the thumping of a big drum. Under the wall the beggars, trying to get a view, leap up and down like caged dogs. Arrived at the middle of the wall, the tumbril is held up a moment. The Rake turns his face toward the Beauty's balcony and removes his hat. Slowly she takes the mask from her face. They exchange glances.

The Harlot, by the Blood Bowl steps, watches the Beauty's face. She sees the anguish thereon, gives a shriek and rushes out.

Again the uproar, the fife and kettledrum, above all the fantastic thunder of the big drum. The Rake resumes his hat. The Parson recommences his exhortations. Suddenly the Rake snatches the heavy volume from the Parson's hand and clouts him so smartly over the head with it that the Parson falls backward out of the tumbril. The crowd boo. The Rake, pulling a cambric handkerchief from the pocket of his golden waistcoat, makes dandaical and disdainful play with it. Fortissimo of uproar. The tumbril moves on. As it goes, a scamp rushes out of Gin Lane holding a cur by the tail, slings it after the tumbril, vaults on to the back of a spectator and climbs on

top of the wall. As the cur hurtles through the air, the Beauty, horrorstruck, resumes her mask and stumbles back into her room.

(45) A tailor's apprentice and a trollop rush in from Ladies Walk and go to the wall. The apprentice, helping the trollop to get a foothold on the wall, takes liberties and receives a box on the ear. The peg-legged sailor tumbles out of the inn, sees no room along the wall and, springing up and swinging one leg over the pawnbroker's sign, pulls a pocket sea-glass out and assumes the attitude of a captain at sea. The Blind Beggar rushes in, pushes other folks out of the light, hops up on the wall and pushes up his eye-shade to see better.

(46) The sound of the procession has died away till only the pipe is heard. It stops. The Beauty appears on the steps of her house. Sudden far off palpitation of the kettledrum. The Beauty claps on her mask, makes as if to run to the wall, stops on tiptoe, listening. . . .

(47) The drum ceases. Silence. Then a sudden uproar. The Blind Man gesticulates to the effect that the Rake has mounted the scaffold. The apprentice on whose shoulders the trollop is standing has no more patience. The trollop, losing balance, grasps at the Blind Man. The three fall in a heap and the peg-legged sailor, seeing his chance, leaps from his perch to the ground and up on to the wall. His wooden leg remains stuck out, stiff with interest. The defeated three endeavour to regain their places. He kicks back with his peg. They attempt unsuccessfully to get a place elsewhere. Then peg-leg remains perfectly still, his peg stuck out as before.

(48) Somebody on the wall speaks to the apprentice as a shout goes up. The apprentice tosses his looped tape into the air as one tossing a noose over a bar. The uproar suddenly ceases; voices can be heard calling oranges and lemons and the voice of the ballad singer beginning a dolorous refrain. Suddenly these cease in full career. Silence. A crash out of which rises a cock crow suddenly and abruptly strangled. The Beauty's mask drops to the ground. Pause. It grows sensibly darker. The fifes burst into the fragment of a jig drowned in an immense hubbub.

(49) The peg-legged sailor snaps his telescope shut, jumps down and begins a macabre hornpipe. Those who have been on the wall and at its base join him. They dance a grotesque jig. The returning crowd rushes in shouting and throwing caps in the air. The Beauty snatches up her mask and rushes into her house. The Bailiff, staff in hand, enters to quell the disturbance. Brief carmagnole about him. The circle breaks up and runs off laughing into the darkness as the Lantern Lighter, coming from Ladies Walk, makes his rounds lighting first the lantern at the corner of Ladies Walk, then the lantern at Fashion Row and last the lantern at Beer Street corner. The Harlot is seen at the back sitting on the courthouse steps, lost in grief, with the Rake's hat in her hand. The sound of fiddles briefly tuning up in a house in Fashion Row is heard and at the same time time light from a ballroom springs out in the Fashion Row wall of the courthouse. The fiddles break into a minuet interspersed

with laughter. The shadows of dancers float across the wall of the courthouse. Moonlight creeps on the panes of the Beauty's house.

(50) A young lady with a young Mohok on each side of her emerge from the inn and make toward Fashion Row. The Harlot approaches them unobserved. The minuet loudens. The young lady extends her arms, the young Mohoks, kissing her finger-tips, bow to her. She draws them close, flirts first with one then the other. The Harlot strikes the three faces across with the hat. One of the young Mohoks wrenches it from her and tosses it to the back, then runs with the young lady into Fashion Row. The other man spins the Harlot round and sends her flying up Gin Lane. Then he follows his companion, joining on the way the Marchioness who, entering from the Beauty's house, has halted a moment to wait for the Beauty. The Marchioness goes on. The music softens. The minuet loudens again for a fraction as the ballroom door is opened, then softens.

(51) The Beauty, mask in hand, steals down the steps of her house. For a moment she listens to the subdued throb of the minuet, then drops her black cloak on the steps and like a pale ghost, her sequinned fan from time to time giving a scintillant vibration, floats into a sad and proud *pas-seul* that is at once intense, spirituelle and phantasmal. From the shadow emerges the form of the Blind Beggar. Every now and then he turns his *vielle*. It gives a brittle, plaintive, spindly sound, which coincides with a tiny flutter of the sequinned fan and with which is contrasted the dry, subdued clatter of the penny in the mug that he shakes. After a little he turn his *vielle* no more and her dance to the music off stage is punctuated only by the shaken penny.

(52) From the shadows by the back of the wall a figure picks up the Rake's hat. The figure, in a golden waistcoat with the hat drawn over the eyes, emerges into the full moonlight. The Beauty, dancing as if in a trance, is drawn nearer and nearer. At last she palpitates before the figure. She wrenches off its hat. It is the Hangman who bows ironically. With a faint scream she drops the hat and moves backward toward the steps of her house. The Hangman, profusely bowing, offers her the Rake's hat in exchange for her mask. Hardly knowing what she is doing she gives it him. The masked Hangman, picking up her black cloak from the steps and twitching it over his shoulders, bows profoundly and requests her company at the ball in Fashion Row. She runs from him toward the inn. Still acting the gallant, he withdraws. There is a burst of music from the ballroom as the disguised Hangman enters, then it softens again.

(53) The Beauty glances at her clothes, makes as if to go after him. At that moment her attention is attracted by two fantastic wastrels who, emerging from the gloom by the wall, trundle a wheelbarrow before them with something heavy in it. She takes refuge in the shadow of the inn's bow window. The wastrels advance, slightly tipsy, halt by the barrow, wrangle a moment or two, then decide to enter the inn and as they do so

they upset the barrow. Singing softly but raucously, with their arms round each other's necks, they enter the inn. Curtains are drawn across the lights on the courthouse wall. The minuet dies away. The barrow and its coffin is left in the centre of the cobbled space. Pianissimo murmur of the city at night. A dog howls and is silent. Murmurs as before.

(54) Bow Bells chime midnight softly, strangely and sweetly, as out of the shadows, from the Blood Bowl, the Harlot steals toward the coffin. The Beauty too approaches and, as far off another bell plangently chimes the hour, the two women meet above the coffin. Not a word do they speak, but, joining hands above the coffin, they sink their heads upon its board. One moment they rest their heads upon it while far off one bell after another echoes and dies to silence, then they rise and try to stand the coffin upright preparatory to wheeling it away to secret and sacred burial. But it is too heavy. Only with a great effort can they raise it. When it is raised, they try to move it first on one corner then on the other toward the barrow.

(55) Suddenly a loud racket breaks out. The Street Musician with hautboy frantically squealing runs through just ahead of the Mohoks, wilder than ever and harshly laughing. They wrench at door knockers and speed on. The Mohok chief, bringing up the rear, halts by the women, points at the coffin, crows ironically. The Mohok chief speeds on.

(56) The coffin seems to give a leap. From within it resounds a strong but stifled crow.

(57) The women drop it and as it falls it bursts open—empty. The women flee—the Beauty to her house, the Harlot to the Blood Bowl. A gust of wind, blowing from nowhere, rattles the signboard over the inn.

(58) The wastrels emerge tottering from the inn. They go to the barrow and wheel it out at a run up Ladies Walk, slapping each other on the back, pleased that the drink has done them so much good.

(59) From different directions the vagrants come hopping as in Scene 7. The starveling gathers the wood of the coffin and places it in the position of the fire in Scene 7. They drowse, warming themselves. It is growing lighter. The lanterns at the street corners gutter out.

(60) The peg-legged sailor scatters the embers as before. Expostulations. A bar or two of the dance to get the stiffness out of their limbs. The ballad singer again turns and sings his refrain to the balcony. The dog howls as before. Once again the Beggar with the violin plays his flourish. Again the horn is heard off stage. But the beggars do not disperse. The Parson and the Country Girl enter quickly at the back. The wind from the field blows. The window opens and the Beauty steps out even as yesterday.

(61) The ostler, blowing his horn, precedes the Rake and the Lawyer. The New Rake advances, looks round. The sun bursts forth in glory. The cocks cry. The Beauty courtesies to the Sun. The New Rake gapes.

(62) The Mohoks irrupt from Gin Lane. At their head prances the Corpse of the Rake, green and with a pale face.

All the Mohoks abruptly stop. Amid brief but frightful laughter from the Mohoks, the Corpse of the Rake points at the New Rake who is gaping.

(63) The Beauty sees the New Rake and is amused at the way he is taken with her. Lightly she plucks a rose from the wall and tosses it toward him. The Corpse of the Rake crows suddenly, piercingly, ironically, callously and with challenge. The New Rake stoops, picks up the rose, sweeps off his hat, would greet the Beauty, throws her an impassioned glance. Louder and even more frightful laughter from the Mohoks. Then, as the New Rake gazes passionately at the Beauty, all the cocks in the world crow gloriously, stridently, in a pæan of almost unimaginable vehemence, the crow of acceptance to life. They are prolonging their crow of an unexampled sonority when there is a double crash as of an earthquake that sets free all the dead to cry their salute to life and

THE CURTAIN SWIFTLY DESCENDS.

IMAGINATION

by STANLEY SNAITH

Out of the heat of toiling universes,
Cleanstruck and tingling from the starry anvil
Comes the body this being of perishing texture,
Informed with instincts and strange ignorant wisdoms
Delivered in the seminary of the womb.
A dust, but fabulously sown
With spirit the invisibly burning flower
Whose roots are conscious in their soil, and spirit
Draws deeply of the waters of imagery,
Immortal rain that bathes the body in light.
Heavenly imagination, one pure drop
From the Caspian of all being,
Far travelled as dew from summer watersheds,
Sprinkles upon the thirsty flower of the spirit
To brim it with a weight of morning fire.
Then—marvellous marrying of two essences—
Flower and drop mingle their poise and contour,
Their loveliness, their delicate identity,
In one still glimmering image,
Infinity opening in a bud of light.
Once more O body ere the winter of death
Shrivel the morning freshness from your meadow
Gather this radiance, this manna of white water,
Lift to the sky a mirror
A bubble of space wherein the systems turn
To and fro as eternity's seasons swing.

THE SUMPH

by PITTENDRIGH MACGILLIVRAY

As I gaed doon the Canongate—
  Think ye that I was blin' ?
Tho' she'd a shawl upon 'er heid,
  An' nae licht but the Mune.

At me she shot a merry glint
  An' gied 'er heid a cast :
Then wi' a lauch she gaily said—
  "I canna let ye past."

My hert gaed thumpin' at ma ribs—
  Am shure I look't a sheep !
As roun' she wheel't an' linkit me,
  While I could hardly cheep.

Quo she : "My lad yer unco bash !—
  A dram wad dae ye guid :
Come in by here—a place I ken—
  They've stuff'll warm yer bluid."

To her bit howff we slippit in—
  I saw she kent the road :
An' in a closet neuk we drank
  Till I was fairly sod.

Her e'en war black, or, maybe broon—
  I couldna say for shure ;
But what she said an' what she did,
  Betrayed she was the Whoor.

An' whan we left the kittle hole,
  Wi'ts wee bit skinklin' lamp—
She leuch at me an' ca'd me "Sumph ! "—
  Jist like some orra scamp.

An' shure eneuch ma heid was fu'—
  Ma pouches they war toom ;
As there I sat beside the door
  No' fit to bite ma thoum'.

But, eh ma Gode ! the wench was fine !—
  She was nae common drab ;
A bonnie lilt was on 'er tongue,
  An' honey sweet her gab.

Gin I gang doon the Canongate
  An' meet wi' her again,
I ken she'll get her will o' me,
  An' I'll be jist as fain !

For tho' she whumml't me, the jaud !
  She stirred me to the core ;
An' gart the sumph that in me was
  Flee hyne forever more.

THE DECEIVED CLERIC

by CHARLES ASHLEIGH

I, in my broadcloth, went to an Inn.
What angry destiny drove me in?

I sat me down to wine and meat,
When, just as I began to eat,

A woman threw a glance at me
That slew my clerical dignity.

She sat herself at my table, and
Drew the fork from my passive hand.

She looked in my eyes and called me 'dear.'
God forgive me, I drew her near.

She shuffled near me her shameless hips,
And smacked a kiss on my heated lips.

God forgive me! Then I kissed her.
That brazen daughter of Lucifer!

I ordered wine, and we laughed and drank.
I blotted God out with a wanton prank.

Together we sailed, next day, for Spain.
And I never saw my poor wife again.

I bought her a fan and a crimson gown.
I sold my Bible for a crown.

I slighted my God at her command.—
Another nail through poor Jesus' hand!

I tended her early, tended her late,
Gave her my soul on a silver plate . . . .

Then a scrounging Spanish guardsman came;
With sleek black hair, and eyes aflame.

She went with him, despite my tears,
In a lousy transport, to Tangiers.

And now I sprawl on a pot-house bench,
And curse the name of that stinking wench.

THE MASTER OF TIME

by NORMAN LINDSAY

I DID not like this man.

Some element of danger moved in my distrust of him. His nose was a predatory beak: his mop of white hair bristled like a crest, and the twitched corners of his long lips gave him that supreme air of contempt to be observed only in the faces of eagles. Moreover, though his clothes were threadbare, he wore them insolently.

To where I sat in the hotel lounge, he strode across, and stared intently into my face. I thought at first that he assumed to recognise me. Then I saw that he merely examined me, and that with the detachment of an entomologist.

"I select you," was all he said, at the end of this performance, and with an abrupt gesture, summoned a waiter to hear this mandate:

"Two rums."

I had before me a glass of sherry and bitters, but this, as a matter needing no comment, he emptied on the floor. The assurance of these passages bereft me of speech, and a beaker of rum placed before me, I could only goggle at it.

"Drink that," he said, and as I reached mechanically for the water, he added "Raw," and withdrew the decanter from my grasp.

This roused me at last. No heritage of piracy has given me a stomach able to support a drench of raw spirits, and I pushed the glass away.

"Drink it," he said, and raised his glass.

"I won't."

"You will."

For a moment of extreme tension, I strove to resist the cool malice of his eye, and it was with no sense of performing an action within the area of any conscious intention that I did, in short, drink it.

When I had done coughing, he again said inexorably, not to me, but to the waiter:

"Two rums."

At this the powers of rebellion were restored to me. "Nothing will induce me to take another dose of that vile fluid," I exclaimed. "If it were not for the fact that my whole existence is devastated by that psychological exhibit in moral evasion defined as courtesy, I never would have touched the first glass. As it is, the dignity of an outraged stomach makes a mere joke of any assumption that I should toss off a second."

"You will," was all he said, and the rums brought, lifted his own and held it arrested at his lips, while his eye sardonically waited on mine.

It is true that no compulsion in imitation is so imperative as that of the gesture which lifts a glass. Yet I am compelled to admit that some higher power of insistence played upon the inertia of my will, for mechanically I raised the glass, and both rums vanished together.

From a paroxism of coughing, I emerged bereft of all further evasions in the name of courtesy.

"Why are you forcing this intolerable fluid on me?" I cried. "Your appearance insults any pretence of hospitable intention; your threadbare garments make absurd its air of spendthrift opulence. As for any assumption of an act festive, the malice of your eye is but part of the detestable oblation of your rum. Why are you doing it?"

"The æsthetic of your stomach plays no part in my intention," said he. "It is your ears I bestow drink on. It is essential to my purpose that inertia should be removed from the act of listening. Rum, at least, may set up a buzzing on the tympanum of your apparatus sufficient to record the tremendous vibrations of my thoughts. Are you now in a condition to listen, or must I—"

"My hearing is acute," said I, hastily motioning the waiter away.

"Then come with me."

He rose. At that moment, I liked him less than ever. The compulsion of his eye shot abominable suspicions through my mind; his predatory beak seemed intent on some terrible brigandage of my moral destiny.

"Anything you have to disclose," I said firmly, "must be disclosed here."

All he said to that was, "Two rums." The admission that they were brought, and drunk, but betrays me in the degrading posture of submitting to an act which every essence of my being violently repudiated. Winking and gasping, and breathing hot fumes of fusel oil, I was led forth into the dark streets, through which he strode to an intended destination, drawing me in his wake as a cork swirls in the eddy of a strong current. In the silence of this dark passage, he seemed ever to grow more dangerous, more relentless, and to stride upon his intention like an automaton of brass.

"Who are you, and what do you need of me," I cried at last, unable to sustain this intolerable quest into the unknown.

At that he laughed Ha! ha! in malice, and Ho! ho! in scorn. "Do you think a label can ticket me among the pigs and sheep called men?" he cried. "Do you think my identity is at the disposal of any moral policeman, to add to the taxed roll of human idiocy. Who I am, no one on earth will ever know; what I am, each atom of matter on earth will know to-night."

On he continued to stride, and after him I to stagger, by an itinerary I have no memory of, but to a destination that ended somewhere in a dark lane, a low doorway, and through that, into an interior of close and chemically flavoured blackness.

In this void, his voice said sternly, "Remain still. Do not speak. Do not move."

I could do no less, being now reduced to helplessness by rum, fear, and confusion. Very slowly, in the blackness, a dim light began to grow, till the apartment was illuminated by a sort of milky radiance, which showed all objects with a

peculiar clarity, yet in a tone subdued as moonlight. Where it came from, I could not divine, but I saw my Master standing over an apparatus in the centre of the room, which seemed to be a structure composed of glass and lead.

Glass and lead, indeed, appeared as the stable properties of this strange seclusion. Two glass sinks, or receivers, of immense thickness, formed the basis of the central apparatus, which was flanked by several high metal screens, either as shields, or reflectors, I could not say. Innumerable lead-covered tubes ran between the two receivers, and above these, on a thick slab of glass, supported on glass rods, and faced with lead, stood a most peculiar mechanism.

In form, it was an oblong glass cylinder, with metal ends, into one of which were fused lead-covered wires, connecting with the two receivers below. From the other end projected a metal object, in the shape of two flat horns, whose points nearly completed a circle. Between these two points, but just above them, and held in position by slender glass rods, was a glass ball, about the size of an orange, which seemed filled with some substance in the property of light. Not that any effect of rays radiated from it, nor did it add to the general radiance which filled the apartment, yet it seemed to churn ceaselessly in a slow, molten agitation, which emitted the shimmer of quicksilver. From the base of the horns there projected what appeared to be a glass lever. For the rest, its mechanism evaded enquiry.

The master of these mysteries then took my hat, which he placed on the floor, and with a slow, imperious pressure, lowered me into a padded chair.

"From the first," said he, "you must be warned. No violent movement must take place in this room. There are forces here which any concussion, even that of a shout, may liberate with disastrous effect."

My docility was now quite automatic. I merely nodded, renouncing, with a secret relief, the right to any further responsibility on my own account. Whatever action I was now committed to in the destiny of future events, lay wholly with this powerful entity, within whose control, I was assured, lay all potencies for good or evil.

He now took his stand by the apparatus, facing me, and spoke thus:

"Having remained silent for sixty years, I now intend to talk a little. In fact, it is necessary that I should liberate my ideas, before liberating the effect of them. Unless the vibration of thought reacts directly upon responsive tissue in understanding, its vitality is apt to diminish in time and space. For this reason, I pay you the immense compliment of making you my first, and last listener on earth.

"As time is short, and will be, in a short time, very much shorter, it is essential that I make my statement simply, firmly, and without the buttress of analysis, which I assume you to have already made. Is that understood?"

I nodded.

"Very well, then," said he. "The object of our peculiar

grouping here to-night can be stated in a breath. It is, in short, to settle the problem of this earth once and for ever. For you are aware that it has a problem,—one only."

"I am aware of that problem," said I, "but I am not aware that it can be stated briefly, or its solution defined in simple terms."

"Its solution lies in one single word—Time!" said he. "And the application of that solution is as simple as the pressure of this glass lever. The evidence of a need for that solution, of course, resides in our knowledge of the past action of this earth in that measurable period labelled historical Time, and our knowledge of the causes responsible for that action, which we sum up under the rough heading of Man. We state the whole of this action, summed up in the word Man, to be bad. As two beings standing at the death end of a century by War, Primitivism, and Hatred, we state finally that Man, observed carefully through all recorded aspects of his past action on earth, has defined himself as a worthless creature, static, moveless, and irresponsible, having within him no controlling powers of self-development, and becoming steadily worse and more dangerous as he accumulates about him the surface effects of manners and contrivances in civilized utility. The obviousness of this, I think, need not be enlarged on. And its statement, of course, touches no assumption that we reprimand Man for moral failure. Rather, with complete detachment from all values, moral or humanistic, we merely record Man and Earth as an experiment that has failed completely."

I nodded. The accumulated analysis of ten years of profound concentration on this problem had already stated its conclusion.

"Do we," he went on, "assume at this point a moral failure also outside Man; a failure, in the calculated æsthetic of this Earth's projection, a failure, in short, of the Gods. For my part, I think not. It seems to me that the projection has fulfilled its intention, which is as we know, to maintain the Earth at a maximum of pain and fear, in order that only the rarest and strongest spirits should survive its ordeal. The system, we see, has devised every possible ingenuity by which Man may damn himself eternally to the Earth. It is not at all concerned to save him. If any saving is done, it must be done by Man himself, and we see in this particular, that all the systems which Man has invented as a means of scrambling out of the bog, have been those most effective in securing his damnation to it.—His religions have so crammed Hell with the damned that they have leaked over and made a Hell of Earth also.

"So much for the malice of the Gods. That they have projected an earth which gives Man the least possible chance of escape from it must draw from us our highest applause. Nevertheless, there is a point where our tolerance ceases. These whips, designed for Man's back, are too indiscriminately applied. We, also, who have no need for them, must accept the indignity of blows; we, who must support the nauseating spectacle of Man, must also support the nemesis essential to his destruction. Now I hold that we are here also for that purpose, but I hold that the Gods, enthusiastically intent in

securing man eternally in the bog of his own self-creation, have overlooked the Time-factor of our intention here in order to make sure of Man's. That is, while we, in the brief glance of a few years, are able to select from Earth all that we need for a single projection of self through its area, which for us, once done, is done with for ever—we, I say, must go on childishly piling up repetition of the same dull experiences which are of no possible use to us, long after we have used up their essence in work, and have no further need for them in life. In short, at the point where we have done with all further need for Earth, all aspects of its stress are piled unendurably on our backs.

"It is at this point, I retort upon the Gods the divinity of my own malice. I applaud the superb success of their projection of an earth, since Man's failure is its supreme evidence of achievement. Nevertheless, I stop short of any further desire to participate in the business, or lend it the countenance of my presence. No doubt it is necessary to keep man statically on Earth, eternally repeating, by recurrent experiences of re-birth, its absurd problems in saved savagery. For no other reason, perhaps, than that Man is merely a stop-gap in matter, which it is essential to keep statically agitated within a certain area of space, in order to complete one link in the higher chain of eternal recurrence. With this, I have no concern. I do not propose to rob the Gods of their chosen blood puddle, or Man of all essential means to his damnation. But for us, the free, the mocking, the gay spirits, I bring a just proportion to bear on the action of our release. If, in a small way, I tamper with the æsthetic of the Gods, I trust the sincerity of their malice will do honour to mine.

"For it is at the point where the Gods offer Man his one road of escape from Earth that I, also, bring my new Æsthetic in Time to bear.

"Art, we know, is the Gods' choicest weapon of attack on Man, since it is the one thing that can save him from the Earth. Beauty, Gaiety, Passion, Love, Delight in the body, all exaltation of gesture which brings vitality to the concrete Image in Art; these Man has been given in order that he may reject them. And the subtlety of divine malice is most expressed here, for the very mechanism by which Man is able to respond to these saving principles has been so devised that by an adjustment of its Time-factor, they become the principles by which he is specially damned.

"For note this. Man is only really base when he has within him a power of response to something really noble.

"This understanding will, of course, limit our attention to the problem of Man to a very small proportion of his species.

"All that goes under the heading of the People's Morality, that of Saviours and Saved; all priest-led rabbles, all that is psychologically understood as 'suppressed,' in short, the mere human brute in his first straight jacket of restraint, we put aside. There are certain conditions of earth that we refuse to touch even with our boot-soles.

"We are concerned with Man only when he becomes least Man,—that is, where he responds to Art.

"And here only, do we begin to realise the adjustment of the Time-factor which is higher Man's especial process in damnation. To realise this, we have but to reach out a hand at random, to select a specimen from our special group who will show this process in action.

"Here is one.

"In youth, he is a charming fellow. Two first principles move his being, Laughter and Girls. To these, all roads lead. A week's poverty is well paid for by a night of tavern-gaiety. If his boots are in holes, the price of a new pair is better spent on a girl. In her choice, he entertains no feeble misgivings. Great Ladies are desirable, no doubt, but their place is well enough sustained by the little waitress from the sixpenny restaurant, who is content with a bottle of grocer's port in this dingy attic of youth's embraces. Besides, however cheap her shoes, or casual her underlinen, she is still the priceless symbol of poetry. Even when in quest of her, his pocket bulges squarely, for it has books in it. Falstaff or Burns, Byron or Rabelais, Cleopatra or Mistress Quickly, Love and Laughter must live by him in holy print, and if his response cover *all* aspects of Poetry, Beethoven and Rubens, Titian and Turner will receive his adoration, too.

"For the spectacle of Life, he has a ceaseless gusto. A street-fight, a mob-uproar, a drunken old woman, a brawl of prostitutes; these enchant him. The distraction of sociology over such diversions engages his derision. As for society, it is but a conspiracy in class-distinction under the disguise of a use for soap. As for a parson,—his expression in such a presence denotes an escape of sewer gas—.

"What a pity, we say, that he cannot die in the full tide of this gay acceptance of life. Surely all adventures in the beyond lie before him. Alas, he moves now on the Time-factor of his blood, which is also his spirit. The moment has not yet come when the action of blood ceases, and he must depend only on the vitality of his spirit.

"See what happens when this point is reached.

"He is now middle-aged. In youth, he had married; and now his children have arrived at youth. With their growth, his own desires have dwindled. In secret, he maintains a grudge against his wife for this. She, having performed her function, is no longer troubled by desire. But with him, starvation in sex, and a fear of that other starvation, a lack of food held in the clutches of tradesmen, have made him nervous and suspicious, conscious always of a terrible competition in the struggle for existence. He is gay now only under brief social stimulus. Alone, he is always depressed, always accumulating small illnesses, always aware of a decaying body.

"Do we ask of this poor worried devil that he should maintain the spirit of his own youth? Not so, that is impossible. But we demand that he should not become its enemy.

"See the regard with which he attends his children, with which he attends *all* youth.

"He is obsessed by a fear that his daughters may have lovers; that his sons should enjoy the gay debauch of his own youth.

Every artifice he can devise is pressed into the service of sterilising their sex-energy. He watches them with an eternal suspicion; and to his daughters, though he does not know it, his emotion is that of a jealous lover, the rage of a eunuch who is furious that any should enjoy where he cannot.

"He has forgotten that he detested his own parents, he has no notion that his children detest him. Disguised under meek airs of submission, they think only of one thing, the moment when they shall escape his clutches in the freed action of their own lives and passions.

"In short, where he once loved, he now hates, where he once moved forward, he now moves backward.

"Have we touched the worst aspect of his moral collapse. Not so. For though he still mechanically acclaims Beethoven and Shakespeare, let any utterance in response to those divinities appear in the youth about him, and he will attack it viciously.

"Baseness can go no further than this—the experience of an earth-existence has been of no value to this miserable devil. He has sunk to a point of moral debility *below* the action of his first emergency.

"Let us understand the cause of this astounding phenomenon. It lies in the confusion of two Time-factors, existing simultaneously at a single point of action.

"For this man, who has reached the age of 40 or 50, represents the overlapping of two generations. He is not only a dead weight imposed on the forward action of his own youth, he is a dead weight imposed on the action of the new generation of youth about him.

"Where they strive to move forward in Time, he strives to move backward. By this eternal process, imposed on each generation in turn, the Earth is kept at its static balance of inertia, and for that reason, the under-savage in man, who is always seeking an outlet for his blood-lusts, is able to impose his creed of commercial rapacity and war on the Earth.

"For this balance of any governing principle in affairs is always in the hands of Man who has reached his collapse point of moral energy. Youth has no say in the conditions it is forced to live under, or the wars it is forced to fight. It is the middle-aged, the aged, the living dead, who control these things; the people who, because they have reached the point of hatred for youth, strive always to maintain any condition that may help to destroy the effort and energy of youth."

He paused, smiled, and gently caressed the glass lever.

"All this," said he, "is doubtless very acceptable to the Gods, for in spite of it, there are always a few who escape their retrogressive Time-factor; a few who, in spite of age, still love youth, still love all that is exultant, vital, laughter loving, and passionate. We are in the presence of the gods' first principle of necessity, that only the rarest shall find a road to immortality in self. My reverence for this principle does not permit me to tamper with it.

"Nor do I propose, by re-adjusting the Time-factor between Man's Progression in Youth, and Retrogression in Age, to

save him from the well-deserved damnation of his own foolery. We may take it as understood that 90 per cent. of our select group of higher men are already damned at the age of 40. The depressive factor is already at work in their blood, the destructive factor in their spirit. I propose no more than to hasten the process of their decay; to rid the earth of the encumbrance of their upright corpses, and force the action of affairs into the hands of youth. By this means all who would have remained young in spite of age, gay in spite of the spectacle of Man, will be released from the boredom of an intolerable exercise in patience.

"Long ago, I saw that the solution to this problem lay in speeding up the Time-factor to a double energy. For to double the action of time is to shorten its duration by half. You see that, of course. You live two minutes in the space of one. You, who are destined for the age of 80, die at 40.

"That problem I have solved. In this globe, you see distilled the electron of Time. In me, its distiller, you see Time's first Master, the destroyer of the Living Dead, the Liberator of Eternal Youth."

He laughed, rubbing his hands. Now I was aware that I loved him. His malice shone like a halo about him. In the supreme contempt of his grin, I saw all flimsy disguises of Man exposed to a remorseless derision.

"Yes, my friend," said he. "Though I sacrificed something of the debauch of youth to this quest, its achievement repays the sacrifice. To you, of course, I need not speak of Time as an abstraction. Even scientists are getting rid of that aberration, and when *they* begin to think, matters are clearly becoming simple.

"The analysis of my search for the Time-electron need go no further than this. As Time and Space are one and the same, neither having existence apart from the other, Matter, to have existence at all, must also exist as a condition of Time and Space, since Time and space cannot reach their point of unity in contact save through Matter. But Matter, to complete its unity with Time and Space, needs the unifying energy of Force. Thus Force becomes the key to all discoverable elements in Time, Space, and Matter. It became essential, therefore, to find a fixed, and therefore measurable quantity in Force by which to compute its action on Matter, which, by an inevitable induction must lead to a measurable quantity in the point of contact between Time *plus* Space, *plus* Matter.

"It will be clear to you that the prime necessity here was to leave the Time-factor severely alone, for Time alone cannot be a measurable quantity, since alone, it cannot even have existence. The essence of the problem lay in finding a quantity in substance measurable relatively with a quality in essence, for by uniting the two, essence and substance, quantity and quality, become a compound relative to, and measurable with, each other.

"At what point was this attack to be made? You will assume, no doubt, that my attention went first to the study of radio-activity and the spectrum-analysis. But what variation

may exist between the simple atom of hydrogen, and the complex atom of uranium was of no value to me as a basis on which to erect the hypothesis of a fixed degree of Force in the action of Matter. These things in themselves are but the effect of Force, not conditions of its generating principle. And where can a generating principle in matter exist save where a generating principle can be defined?

"Here, then, began my search. Not to the spectrum of Light, but the spectrum of Mind, my analysis was directed. For Mind is both a substance in matter which is also a controlling force of Matter. It is the supreme unity of these two first essentials, by which all actions in Time and Space come into being.

"To what Mind did I subject this test, you ask. My own, of course. For since I alone can formulate this governing principle in the action of Time, Space, Force, and Matter, my mind alone can supply the substance of its analysis.

"In short, by a simple combination of two hitherto unknown rays of light beyond the ultra-violet, it is now, for me, the simplest matter to liberate for examination the substance of any mind, as the X-ray reveals for examination the coarse substance of the body. A demonstration of this would be simple, but here it must be dispensed with. I myself am now a condition of my own self-evolved æsthetic of a variation in Time, and must submit to its essential Law, for the distillation of the Time-electron is completed, and nothing can arrest its action. If my gesture did not presently liberate it, it would liberate itself.

"A final point remains only to be defined. By finding the factor of movement in my own substance of Mind, and relating it to the factor of movement in the substance of Light, I reach a point of contact with all elements of matter, for these, as you know, are reducable to two units, vaguely known as positive and negative electricity. In short, since I am able to control the substance of the Mind-electron, I am able to enforce upon it all degrees of energy within the range of my power to conceive the action of that energy. This I chose to accentuate by half, doubling its action, which, by a demonstrable equation, I am able to define as the variation of the normal higher mind between youth and age.

"Finally, by allying the redoubled activity of the Mind-electron to the action of the light-electron, in the space of a second every other atom of matter in this earth will vibrate with redoubled activity, for Light is the penetrable substance of *all* substance.

"Thus, my friend, I have achieved the conquest of Time. By liberating the electron of Mind *plus* Light enclosed in this globe, which I have but to press this lever to accomplish, I change the whole æsthetic of this Earth."

He paused, and it seemed to me, his fingers hovered tenderly above the glass lever.

"Have you forecasted all inevitable results," I asked hurriedly.

"I have," said he. "Within the space of this act of liberation, every old person on this Earth will be dead. Every

one over 40 will have a period of days, months, at most, a year or two, to live. Within a short space of time, already shortened by half, the living dead will cease to clog all by-ways to the adventure of life. All gay souls within the age limit of 40, will find their moment of release at hand. That damned exercise in patience that waits for death will be lifted from their spirit. What happiness. For the rest, affairs will of necessity fall into the hands of youth. If life becomes a trifle more violent and riotous, it will become stronger, gayer, more vital. Blood and spirit will use their energy freely. There will be no more miserable hoarding against the penury of age. The purpose of the Earth's æsthetic will be maintained. Life will be born and protected. Art will be produced. If we are not again to have the 106 Sonata, we will have the Eroica, if The Tempest is not to be ours, we will have Rosalind. Yes, we will have an Art strong, gay, and vital, like its youth, for all that have anything worth saying, can say it very well in the space of 40 years.

"Of course, for a while, there may be some little uproars, and doubtless the lower peoples will begin evangelising, and Messiah-mongering, while shouting Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and cutting throats at random. But these trifles will pass. However, be careful to note one thing. We are not forcing upon the Gods an undesirable quantity of the saved. We are merely ridding the earth of an unnecessary quantity of the damned. And youth may at last take its fill of the adventure of life, no longer a crushed, furtive sneaking adventure filched from under the shameful gaze of its elders, but the true Dionysia of young bodies, who adore the function of their own begetting. Let the Gods take that oblation in happiness at least, since by my malice, I lift half the stress of 'their ingenious creation.'"

He stopped, smiled, and remarking, as in finality, "That is all, I think," laid his hand on the lever.

Involuntarily, I wished to arrest him, but he stayed my gesture with a sardonic grin.

"What age are you," he asked.

"Forty-one."

"You have perhaps a few months of life left you, perhaps not. As for me, I shall die in the release of this lever. And now, please remain silent. It is necessary that I adjust the action carefully, so that the fusion of forces is exactly balanced."

By no composure of mind could I formulate utterance at that supreme moment. As one submits to the gesture of a remorseless destiny, I watched in silence, while with the care of one used to the manipulation of delicate mechanisms, he pressed the lever slowly down, bringing thereby the two points of the horns together.

At the instant of contact, there was a blinding flash, and light streamed from the mechanism in a vast wave, driving upon my senses an imperishable impression.

Against that destructive glare, the figure of the Time-Master rose like a great evil bird. His grin of malice was turned upwards, and through the light, and beyond it, I saw a group

of faces lovely beyond any dream of mortal beauty, with an immortal anger in their eyes.

This went in the passage of the flash. Then there remained the Time-Master only, standing in the dim light over his mechanism. With deliberate movements he smashed one by one the glass rods that held what remained of his apparatus together, and as he did so, the light faded slowly out.

In the darkness, I heard the tinkling fall of glass, and then a heavy thud.

Trembling, I lit a match. He was lying across the broken mechanism, and a glance at his pallid face, sardonic and grim, told me that he was dead.

I waited there no longer. In truth, I was removed now from all emotions of fear, pity, wonder or despair. Finality also, was within my grasp; the reward and nemesis of all earth journeys, which lie beyond the open door of death.

As I walked through the streets home, it seemed to me that I detected in many houses a certain movement of agitation and alarm. Lights moved hurriedly; people, half undressed, passed before doors and windows, and some, detached from houses, ran lumberingly about the streets, as in quest of doctors. And between two doorways, two small boys, roused in this disturbance of their elders' world, exchanged an item of gossip.

"Our gran'pa's dead," said one.

"So's ours," said the other.

And both, with one accord, uttered a secret, but exultant chirrup.

As for me, I complete this writing, and continue to wait. In the dawn of a new age, already the Time-electron stirs in redoubled energy the blood and spirit of Youth. But the test of that spirit has not yet come, for the Living Dead still cumber the earth by millions.

Nevertheless, patience, dear youth of the new generation. In a few months, or at most, a year or two . . . . . .

WHEN THE FIRST LIGHT

by THOMAS EARP

When the first light came from the doubtful east,
The garlands faded and the dancing ceased;
We stood before each other, ashen-hued,
And each one feared a separate solitude.
Then gradually you leaned to me, and smiled
Out of your own sad knowledge, like a child.
And I who saw you, in that cold dawn knew
Your strange mechanic smile was yet more true
Than dawn itself and our own weariness;
For now we had each other to possess,
And, having seen into each other's heart,
Were rich together who were poor apart.

JULES LAFORGUE

TWO POEMS TRANSLATED BY JACK LINDSAY

A SMALL AND UNPRETENTIOUS PRAYER

Our Father who wert in Heaven . . .
PAUL BOURGET

Our Father Who art in Heaven O so high,
To think Thee down no Telescope is able—
Give us this day our daily bread, say I,
Or rather a small seat at Thy big Table!

Tell me now, dost Thou think we're children still
From whom all Serious Subjects must be banned?
And wilt Thou have all slaves beneath *Thy Will*
On earth as it is in Heaven? It's hard to stand!

At least, please *Lead us not*, by kindness shown,
Into temptation of embracing Thee!
And leave us, dead to Better Worlds, alone
To feed, laugh, fornicate here peacefully! . . .

Peacefully feed and fornicate and laugh . . .

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

She is not merely Flesh for me,
I am more than Sentiment for her—
Acting the fool, we wish to stir
Fables of intricate intimacy.

O yes! you understand me, dear!
O you know how to do the deed.
Where there's a will there's a way, it's clear,
And you know where to saddle the steed.

If from these Maskings I unloosed me,
Confessed I was haunted by her eyes—
O then one evening: "You've seduced me,
However . . ." Love alive would rise.

And each would love himself, in turns,
Where the fat Sun of the poultry-yard burns,
Or towards the Moon—and so endeavour
For noble perspectives starred with Ever.

O it's not Flesh alone we bare,
It is not merely Souls we embrace . . .
The proud Spirit of Eden there
Lusts to be Man with Woman a space.

DUNG OF PEGASUS

by PETER MEADOWS—Part III

Seaside Idyll: Chapter the Sixth

I had no intention of catching her eye. Nothing was further from my thought than an amorous challenge as I raised my head from the book to look round, more to escape the insistence of print than to observe anything. By that obscure conviction, unalterable by any experience, that travelling is the time for a little quiet reading, I had added to the general discomfort by bringing with me a book I felt I ought to have read. For I feared to be revealed in a literary discussion as a patched pretender to plenary knowledge, an echo of academic copybooks detected in the act. And just now I took literary discussions very seriously. I could place Lydgate or Phineas Fletcher with delicate exactitude, and it shamed me to be exposed as an enthusiast on Russian novels, whose gorge secretly so rose at *Anna Karenina* that he could never penetrate far into its jungle of peasant smells. For without undue mysticism I may, I think, claim that certain books produce odours. As a child even, I could never read *The Pilgrim's Progress*; and a distinctly unpleasant stink, compounded of sweaty armpits, hate, rotting cabbages, and chastity, exudes from any book by Tolstoi. Now when I am ashamed of nothing except my early indiscretion in reading textbooks, it is heartening to remember that my spiritual nose rejected the ugly odour of decay that Tolstoi called earth, or the pallid spectral equivalent for dung which he called heaven.

I caught her eye; and the physical impact of my emotion was as though someone had hit me hard on the back. I seemed to stagger forwards, my head going up with a jerk. Really, I sat quite still.

I heard the leaves of my book flap, and many laughters scratching on a metallic surface of consciousness. Everything felt breathless with anticipation, though jarred with turning noises like those the needle takes from a buzzing gramophone record as it scrambles towards the sweet release of the first chord. In the same way I waited for an apocalypse of liberating music, which did not come.

I was looking into two eyes; but my thought was not of two but of one. Not of one eye even, but of some magical point of light carved on a blue immensity. And even then there was some vanishing joyousness beyond, which I appeared to be staring into: a crystalline intensity no colour could shape.

Then my mind giddily collapsed down this cavern of vision as if I had been looking through a reversed telescope which was rapidly shut up. The patterns of kaleidoscopic sunlight reverted to the normal world of forms; and there she was, sitting opposite me a few feet further down, well barricaded off by a family of some five or six children who seemed, to my inexperienced eye, all of exactly the same age.

She was fair, she was tall, and the cheap muslin betrayed her nipples. She was as fresh and as full of life and simple gusto

as the medley of bouncing sunlight and trippers' chatter blown about her. She matched the easy exuberance of the day, in which the sea pranced and tripped with practised excitement, and the holidaying sun beamed plumply, a commercial-traveller sun that slapped you with gold, an undampable familiarity of jostling light. She breathed; and the waves rose and fell with the mechanical motion of a rocking-horse, and the smoke from the funnels reminded you of those brave illusions made of fatly painted tin attached to a toy locomotive, so suavely cut were its curves. I could not hear her heart; but the beat of the boat's engines added a definite pulse of restless and organised enjoyment to the most serious of all quests—that of the people determined to have a good day's outing.

Not now across a trembling abyss of azure, but through this furore of complicated sunlight, I looked into her eyes. I must have had a half smile on my face, forced there by the performing amiability of the day, for she smiled back unmistakably. I tried to convert my dubious grin into a full-sized acclamation of her person, and had a painful sense I had merely distorted my countenace. I turned away.

I watched the juice from an orange running down the chin of a fat woman in front of me. It dripped off gently, delayed a little by the long hair of a warty tumescence. One more daring drop ran half way along this hair before it joined its fellows just inside the discoloured edge of her corsage. This did not incommode her, or perhaps the juice did not soak through the thick undergarment. I watched, hoping to see a drop travel the whole length of the hair, but none did. She finished the orange and threw the rind overboard after offering it to a small boy.

I drifted into a daydream of which the chief constituents were a desert island and a tall fair girl thrown up naked by the obliging ocean; and there was a tang of salt on her nipples as I kissed them one after the other, for she was still in a kind of swoon even after I had laid her out on the warm grass. I was trying to decide whether she should stay for an hour or so in this swoon, obviously at my mercy, or whether my fancy was gentlemanly enough to let her come to, when I glanced up again and found the problem settled. Nothing could be more awake than the two eyes into which I dissolved.

This time I flattered myself that I did my visage greater justice; and, pleased, I returned to my island-harem, inventing unnecessary wiles for the luring of helpless and naked girls (always unaccountably ignorant of their own anatomy) into the consummation of my elaborately concealed intention.

A third time the involuntary impulse drove me to stare at her, and there could be no error about the provocative glint of her blue eyes that reflected the mingled gold of curling sun and hair. I would have walked over to her, but now from the background quilted with arch waves and lovers stiffly self-conscious or happily squeezing (some behind backs, some under the coats on laps, some openly), there was detached aggressively a large young man who gave the effect simultaneously of being too big for his clothes and of their being too big for him. He

was sitting beside her, and noticing the ravisht expression of her eye, he glanced frowningly along her line of vision, and spoke sharply. I caught:

"What's . . . looking like stuck pig."

I saw her lips move with a demure villainy, but I could not hear her voice, though to my straining imagination a bell of silence seemed struck, a globe of music submerged in dull seas of noise.

"Lots of view in them funnels . . ." he answered savagely.

She smiled faintly back and relapsed into that satiated silence peculiar to women, which man for all his questions has never yet penetrated. Women's comments on love are always banal and for the most part delivered at moments when the baldest statement of pleasure, the simplest encore, comes exquisitely to the labouring male. Except for that they use phrases from the trashiest novels or turn to this smile blissful, omniscient, aloof. They are able to sustain sensation where the man can only irritate himself, and to bask in a tepid infinity of mental caresses. Yes, my dear, unfold your lazy hands. I know you; that is what I am a poet for. I know you can sit upon kisses like a hen upon eggs. Yes, you dear girl, broody with lust, incubating kisses in your blood. I can do that too, for I am a poet, and so both man and woman, though I hatch poems. Come, Gioconda, I flagged you with sphyngine laughter, get off your nest of kisses, I want my breakfast.

Here, the girl lay back, smiling faintly into her own mind; and her companion continued glaring at the water with the depressed fixity of one intent on missing no possible sight at whatever cost to himself.

I read one sentence indefinitely; then lifting my head, once more found my eyes engaged in lecherous commerce. I cursed the stolid fellow. I loved her smile; it was a full, merry mouth, but not curving broadly to a smile—it widened with the merest hint of a lift at each end; the lips themselves, curled slightly back, revealed a lasciviousness at once tender and cruel. But with her eyes she laughed unreservedly, a hearty gusty gold; and this reticent lust, this careless gaiety, mingled with charm in her round clear face.

People pushed between, in, past, over us. Children trod on each other's hands and bawled. A blind man with a violin constructed of deal wood and kerosene-tin squeaked disconsolately; there was an inscription stuck in his hat THIS MAN IS GUARANTEED BLIND AND A FAMILY MAN PITY ME. A woman suddenly afflicted with modesty put up her umbrella in front of herself while she fed her baby from the breast, and was accused by an old gentleman with cotton wool wisping from his ears, of obstructing the passage.

"Get away, old man," said the fat woman, "can't you see this is her first and she's a bit bashful-like with it? I was just the same myself. Let the lady have her fancy and go round the other way. You're rude, you are." He obeyed, grumbling. Another child got its hand caught between the planks of a seat and howled, obsessed by the horrible imagination of a life fettered to the seat of an excursion steamer. And still our eyes met: hers blandly, mine furtively.

Her owner awakening from his holiday swoon intercepted my glance and scowled at me. I looked on and past him with a blank assumption of passionate interest in the transparent hat of a woman near him, and then returned with masterly casualness to my book. Damn her, has she had a quarrel with her large lover, and is she using me as a stalking-horse for his jealousy? She can't expect me to go over and speak to her and be knocked out. . . . I will not look at her. I will not.

So I caught her eye again.

As a great treat a brown-paper bag was presented to a small boy to burst. He hit it sideways, and it tore without the glorious bang. To console him, he was given a lemonade bottle to throw overboard at a clear loss of a penny which could have been claimed on its return. It plopped splendidly.

"Do you think I hit a fish?" he asked.

"Don't be silly."

"Would it have killed a shark if I hit it?"

Blue; opaque as the stone of the sky, yet slitted with a rectangular malice, what is it you say? There is a cold reserve in the blue for all the deceptive warmth that blurs from the lashes, a certain porcelain-glaze of calculating laughter. Yet the sky is the veriest poster beside the enigmatic shallowness of these smiling eyes.

"I bet I killed a shark."

A little of the superfluous milk from the luxurious breasts of the mother who had just fed her child had stained the blouse in two mauve circles, and now a few white drops welled out and fell to her lap. Suddenly she realised this, clutched at her umbrella, hesitated, and, after a glance round to see if her shame had been witnessed, turned her body as far as she could seaward and stayed thus, diligently following the leisurely flap of the seagulls, with one arm thrown up to hide the front of her blouse.

"Don't you worry," gleefully said the fat woman at her side. "I was just like that myself. More milk than I knew what to do with; me husband used to call me the milk-can, which I will say I don't think it was funny though always ready and the first to laugh at jokes against myself where others wouldn't, and could have let myself out as a wet nurse only William would have it wasn't respectable, he was that particular about things, *your* husband isn't with you, is he? Perhaps he'll be waiting for you at Redcliffe? There was no one to see you off was there? Well, men are not to be trusted, though I don't mean to infer anything, and I never set up to be a man-hater or wanted the vote, though, of course, it's nice to get a free ride in the motor-car on voting day, yet I never could believe a word he said, for he *was* a fascinating man, and a perfect lover to the last though he died of Bright's disease and in mortal agony yet would not let me sleep in another bed, being as jealous as a tiger; but it's funny your husband not meeting you, now——"

"I want another bottle."

Again the scene slashed with a million ruffled lights slid into a chasm of farthest blue. Behind the mask of a fastened smile someone I did not know was looking at me.

I decided I would not let my eyes stray. There was no point in the whole proceeding. But some fist of impish laughter banged up my chin. I began to get uneasy. You can surely command the motions of your head. Still, jammed in so tightly, with only a few yards open in front there is not much choice of views. And some malign attraction drew me, though despite what seemed to me a supernatural agility in averting my face before the least suspicious move on her owner's part, I could see that he was growing annoyed. She simply disregarded him, and smiled with a faint sidelong disdain at all his efforts to engross her attention.

"Wait if I catch you . . ." I overheard.

A paralysis of the will crept over me. I could not read, I had no interest in the commotion of napkins on my right, I noted idly (and remembered it next day) that the hand of the youth a little further along had advanced six inches more under his girl's muff. I made up my mind to go below; but a delicious torpidity, as though I had drunk large quantities of old Burgundy, dearest, your tippled smile, what a rich juice of delight, began to numb me. Moreover it seemed that I would earn some undying contempt by slinking off without making some gesture. I will go, I thought, in a minute—after that sandwich is eaten; after we pass that sailing-boat; after that girl finishes taking her hat off; after . . .

Some new excuse each time. I didn't want to remain. I remained. Apart from the danger of being assaulted, I felt a fool. But such qualms had no power over me. I was the creature of an insane irresolution. I wondered how long it would take for them to pull him off me.

But there was no fight. My rival sat with folded arms, watching me. I in turn watched him slyly, taking advantage of any weakening on his part when he fell into his holiday coma, to submit to a remorseless fascination I no longer combated. She smiled quietly, lulled by secret voices, not mine, not his, but crying peacefully from the air of her own mind. Women are all unconscious mystics of lust. Life moves by securer tides in this refluent laughter of a subtly beaming silence than the waters harnessed to the moon; and the pulses of her purpose are more powerful than this thumping boat hurled on sliding seas.

All very well; but why expend this smear of warm silence, this dark and happy purpose, in so idiotic circumstances, so unmeaningly, and on me?

Still, there was no fight. We slowed in to the wharf; and amid the hullabaloo of arrival, questions of children, packing of pannikin and biscuit, shuffling merriment, I too stood up, very relieved. My mind soared like the siren, rocketing through blue air. By bad luck the other actors in my ocular intrigue were shoved close behind me, and he took a savage pleasure in joggling me with elbow and knee, hurting me intensely. Slowly the thick procession waddled up the gangway; to disperse rapidly along the jetty. I did my best to push ahead, but my persecutor managed to stick to me. At last the gangway was reached; a few more steps, and I would be safe. A particularly nasty jab sent the book from under my

arm into the water. Some fool of a woman gave a shriek of surprise, and I heard a voice, "Was it her baby?" With a final wrench I reached the splintery beams that meant freedom. I did not look back.

But we met again.

That evening I strolled along the beach, alone of course, keeping to the water's edge from a mistaken sense of delicacy; I did not wish to startle any lovers who might fill the hollows of the shadows. Mistaken, because such interruptions, as long as there are not too many of them, do not worry lovers but provide them with new chuckling intimacies, musky whispers blown on cheek and obstinate hair and the retreating moonlight. I found later on that when I calmly welcomed, in pyjamas, two girls into the flat which I was suddenly sharing with a mutual friend, that I had no emotion but a spiteful delight (for they were both virgins, to my certain knowledge) and a pleasant vanity. Seldom have I felt so at ease. In fact whenever I have been discovered in an uncompromising position at a party, vanity has predominated. A proof of my basic humility, for I must be myself so astonished really at any girl caring for me that these public reassurances of the fact touch me sweetly.

I walked along, trampling out the wreaths of foam-flowers and the trailing moonlight, and occasionally bursting some tough watery grape of seaweed between my shoes. I passed round a point where the sand was filled with sunken rocks. Here the land-edge approached the sea nearly, and I stood for a while in the shadow of a bathing-house.

I thought; or rather I let vague memories, mostly complacent, but ripped at times by a lunge of shame, melt through my mind. Ugly memories jerk into consciousness like a stone thrown by some subliminal urchin; the waters splash angrily, discomfort bubbles, then the image is effaced, is hastily gobbled down like food we hate but are too polite to spit out in public.

I thought. Stars, pin-pricks in heaven's floor dribbling nectar split by the gods; use that. (I did, the thunderous odes of that period testify:

> Light stamping out the earth, the antenatal
> Flowers of the air, and the titanic shock
> Of whelmed heavens, and the whirling fatal
> Husk of delivered earth, new mud and rock,
> Sun-lions . . . and the sanctities of night
> Where girls stand naked in their mirrors, neath
> The nectarous stars dripping through heaven's floor,
> Pin-pricks, stars drawn like daggers from their sheath—
> Mysterious light
> That once with ancient gods as flesh I wore.)

How sluggish this gruel of moonlight; girls have navels, I couldn't write that poem for sneezing, catarrh of inspiration, that girl in a bathing costume, with one leg uncovered a bit higher than usual, showing a white rim of flesh like a pale garter against the browned skin; the Mid-Victorian Commandment. Women have no legs or at the very most they have one leg,

Plato calls Light an axis, I wonder what girls think about: legs, one of Ingres' nudes couldn't be seduced, not a moral, a physiological impossibility; Etty's could, how quaintly delectable with an Early Victorian coiffure and glistening oval faces and warm Venetian legs, if Light is Matter, Matter must be Light, darkness must be Light, I mean a condition of Light, she carried the parasol of the sunset and it suited her copper hair, but where were my kisses? Helen they were diffused in a fury of talk, Matter must be clotted Light slowed down by friction with evil but then passivity must be an active principle I know Helen was trying to avoid me I shouldn't have hung on Black and White are then abstractions signifying interlocking forces and Light is the passive of Darkness, that girl to-day. . . .

In a spasm of shame and misery I sat down on the grass. From the gate of a house some hundred yards down the beach a couple appeared. I noticed that the girl seemed somehow familiar. Then I saw, in a drift of light, that she was the replica of my golden rosy girl of the boat, a reproduction of that gilt china in fiery and tender silver. Her curls that had been soft wiry sunlight, spun and distinct fire, were now one bloom of moonlight; and she seemed taller.

They had come very near when I heard him answer to an inaudible request, "Get your scarf? Now, isn't that just like you. Well, come back for it with me."

Again inaudible lutes like plucked moonlight. Then, "Alright, I'll go."

She looked after him a moment, then walked slowly my way. Alarmed, I stood up, coming through the shadow like a clown through a hoop, and whitewashed with a bucketful of moonlight that smarted in my eyes. She was not a yard away.

I sought for some remark. There was a strange seriousness on her face, not recognition or surprise or joy, but an intentness. Then her eyes opened widely.

She came forward, and I drew her down. I have never again felt anything as pliant as she felt then. Her mouth found mine.

It was as well for me that excessive excitement flows quickly to its death. Otherwise I had been left with a fragmentary dream. As it is, a brief but perfected laughter echoes in my mind. We exchange our raptures first straightforwardly, and with no variation of rhythm. Decorative effects of looped kisses, and the delicate rubato of a lingering music anxious to lose no modulation of delight, come later.

We lay in the limbo between these two. Her mouth was open and her eyes closed as if she were under some sweet anæsthetic; when a belated sense of caution made me look to the right, over her head. The other was returning.

How shall I get her to pull herself together? I thought dazedly. But she had felt my gesture and turned too, lazily. At once I found myself propelled violently on to the sand, striking my head against some woodwork. Sitting up, I saw that she was on her feet. A few quick smoothings, and she was strolling to meet the oncomer. She walked quietly and nonchalantly, a bored walk. She had long legs. Alighting moonlight flurried about her like the wings of birds.

"What have you been doing?" he asked.

"I was taking some sand out of my sandshoes," she replied in level tones and with the vague inattention of one speaking of trivial matters. That was all I ever heard her say, for she took his arm and led him without altering her step in the opposite direction. He looked back once suspiciously, but made no effort to resist her. I saw her stroll along, taking rather big but slow steps with her long legs, and sending the moonlight fluttering about her head like a scared bird as she arranged her scarf, till they passed behind some Moreton Bay figs.

A Conversion: Chapter the Seventh

When I was young I used to drink
Port and lemonade and think
It had an alcoholic taste—
Bacchus forgive me! So we grow
    From stuff too sickly even for whores
Talking in clammy voices round
Small tables in winebars damp with gloom,
Hopefully peering at the door
Through a recurrent anecdote
And the duel of cigarettes,
    To nectar leaking into the mind
From staved-in suns . . .
                Lapping up star-beams,
I mean to swill until I draw
Those bloody fires into my maw
And, bloated with light, wake to find
Heaven's ditches after a night out
And walking over me a spidery wind.

                Now I know
Having passed the rowdy comradeship
Of beaming beer, that whisky alone
Can for one gulp deceive the soul
Which sets for festal goal
Ecstasy engulleted—
Beyond the glister of kisses, beyond
Star-buoys paddling in a pond,
To have and hold, from foot to head,
Laughter knotted with music, to roll
In luscious slush of paradise
(A bubble in honey) closed about
With exquisitely tepid skies.

But never a drink that man has brewed
And put in bottles for our casual parties,
To make me babble of tremendous kisses
                and moons crevassed in silver,
And make lewd girls a little more lewd,
Can fetch from Asia,
                from Ida, from Oporto,
The cymbals of gigantic death.

How may one best distinguish the girls
That dot the mind with graves of sentiment
Breaking at the Gabriel-trumpets of Spring
To flocks of daisies (kisses resurrected in poems) and the scent
Of wandering musicks?

Surely best by the sopped-off labels
Of the flasks which each name first to thought provokes—
Beer's sturdy sluts, and all wine's wriggling wenches,
Brandy's deep-voiced courtesans . . . some sweet face smokes
From each of memory's debauches.

The Sweeter-than-port Era of my life
Is dedicated aptly
To a girl who sang a warm contralto.

Only when asked, however,
To an accompaniment of sycophantic chords
From the anxious piano.
Never she bloomed into reckless laughter
Seeking to vocalise lubricious rhythms
In those reaches of the moon.
Never the Isolde-sob took the pitch of my kisses
Shelving through semitones of ecstasy
Into the release
Of trombones heraldic of eternity.
Dumpy delicious moon-child!

For a month by a river of gurgling silver,
On the steps of an old ferry-house,
Wood rotting half to mud,
I sat and talked and saw the dove-breasted moon
Amid great spilth of stars
Move pouting to its nest.

That enormous tree,
Dewy with stars and housing half the sky,
Still floats, a dabbled mass of dædal darkness
flitting
To bunches of vanishing little blossom-fires,
Fastidious roccoco of the moon.

I noticed her first at an afternoon-tea reception
On some tennis-lawns,
Lolling among young trees and eating cake.
"You don't really mean the things you write," she said.
I was standing up nervously trying
To keep my hair out of my eyes and drink tea,
Talking all the while
With the shapeless splay-enthusiasms of youth,
Talking, talking, and watching with happy despair
The sun's boisterous approval of the girls
Striking bits of beauty like medals on the air
Then snatching them from the eyes that long for life

To freeze into sculpture of enduring fire, and remembering all
the time to keep
The part of the icing I like best for the last bite.

Blouses pinned with showy nipples,
and a voluble wind of fun
blowing open the blossomy faces
for the ferial sun.

"I do," I answered, "I do.
Poetry is the only true Sociology,
Since Venus' bye-laws prettily obeyed
Would produce more civilised communities
Than any religions vermined out of the East.
Wars should be decided by conflicting epics,
Politics should expire in low farces
full of tintacks and mothers-in-law
Or else a melodrama with bombastic moustaches
and snow made out of Blue-books."

"You will get over it someday," she said.

"Never. I am bitten by the tarantula
Of verse and I must dance
Until I drop down dead,
Until the tired maenads
Reel from the coverts of my heart,
Leaving death a trophy of stained tambourines
And soiled kisses."

She looked tenderly at me, and I saw at once
She had decided to reclaim me, and so
I knew she would be mine to unbutton soon.

I was not quite so foolish as my hair
Made me look. I thought:
Wait till I get you near the Moon sweet Bawd,
Wait till my fingers get among your hair
Taking the hairpins out,
Wait till I have you lidded with the Moon,
You Virgin consuming tea
And hung with sunlight, wait till you meet the Moon
Arm in arm with me.
"I'm sure you're really nice at heart," she said,
And put her teacup down.

I took her out to tea,
I took her out for walks,
And with a dangerous smile of pity she listened to
Me talking.

We absorbed expensive cream-puffs while
In air moted with music we sat,
For a dark music, cymbals of grating silences,

Shook about her;
And I liked the way her hair showed in the front
Under her hat.

Do you remember what a simple lovely world
We were cushioned in?
I do, though I can hardly believe it.

Do you remember its queer blooms of sunlight
And its pitched moons?

But sunlight was the queerer of the two.
It turned everything into
Flowers of porcelain,
Hard as gems yet crumbling to a blaze
Of motion unpetalled like a rose
By showery winds.

All light came through flower-filters ere it graved
Your subtle cheeks which I adored to see
Sucked in as you pouted a kiss to me
Looking up under your lashes as you poured out tea,
Holding the teapot lid on with the tip of your forefinger,
Charming conscientiously . . .
The shifting cloud of sculptural colour laving
Your face's mischievous beauty.

And in this underlight of flowers
Waded our afternoons
Among the wavering houses and
The undulating trees,
Tendrils of swaying light, and lamposts
Antennæ of green fire
Stuck to the pavement
But twisting their iron jaws about
To catch the minnow stars
And swallow their wandering shoals.

"But there must be something in religion," she said.

"What?"

"O look how people believe in it." She pulled the knot of the scarlet silk handkerchief tied over her head, slightly further to the front; relented, and pulled it back, walking a little slower so as to get a satisfying view of herself in the mirror. I smiled, but also inspected myself. The town was almost empty at the late hour except for an odd implacable policeman here and there, tunicked in floating shadows. I had forgotten that I wore a yellow paper-cap serrated like a cock's comb. She was very amused and serious, very distrait and earnest.

"But," I said, "people believe in all kinds of things: bad luck and broken mirrors, the economic interpretation of history, the non-fecundity of the second orgasm, the Holy Ghost and osteopathy. Take your pick, but none are as real and filling as kisses. Why not believe in a kiss?"

"Of course you know more words than I do."

It was almost two o'clock.

"You're sure you're not tired?"

"I'm never tired." Her cheeks were flushed with a crystalline laughter, her mouth was half open, she kept her tongue just visible like the tongue of a shoe, her eyes were those of one who has awakened early in the morning after twelve hours' sleep.

"Why Spanish?" I asked.

"O I just happened to have the costume, it's Dorothy's really, I mean she had it and I just took it. I'd forgotten . . ." she went on vaguely. Then she was herself again.

Her happiness was too flagrant, she was radiant as though she had that moment got out of a bath, bright and fresh from rubbed-in soap. She applies happiness with a nail-brush, I decided; that is why she shines, scrubbed. Why was I so weary?

The clock of the G.P.O. let out its melodious squabble of birds.

"What were you saying?" she inquired, politely.

"Shakespeare is sensual," I began determinedly. Some loafers laughed at my cap. When we had passed far enough out of their echoing derision, I took it off and folded it up; I intended to sleep in it that night. In the stillness my voice lifted as clearly as a flame burns where there is no draught. I had a sudden doubt that she was still awake.

"You do look pretty," I broke in.

"Why?" The small nose had no powder left on it; it shone, ungreasily, with a healthy pallor.

"It is obvious that the body can only exist as a condition of spirit."

"But there must be something in religion."

"Can't you give a reason?"

She paused in her step, looked up expectantly at me. Her face was dusted with bright laughter; she started to think, brushing the laughter off. Her eyebrows narrowed.

"Look at all the churches." She was relieved, happiness burned up again under her skin.

"But there are also Turkish Baths for the homosexuals," I explained patiently. "I do not deny that religious people exist, only that they ought to be ashamed of themselves. You're keen on science——"

"I dissected a frog yesterday; best of all the class. I caught it myself in our garden, we were told to. Such a big frog. What a funny feeling they have, just like a wet glove, I mean a skin one, you know, not a cloth one. I boiled one once by mistake, and it shrank up like a baby's one, you know. . . ." The interest evaporated out of her voice, she ended on a bored indecision of cadence.

"But do you really mean to say God means anything in your life?"

"O I always say my prayers every night; three."

We turned the corner. I noticed how my reflected grins pread my mouth out thinly sickle-fashion, giving my face a silly old-man look; I should never smile, I wrinkle so. We

were in long grottoes of tailors' dummies, stalactites of iron and wilting confectionery. There was no one else in the street. The tram that cantered past us was a centaur looking for a brewery. Suddenly I was happy too.

"Think of me the last thing before you go to sleep."

"Certainly." She was surprised. "If you want me to. But how will you know? You wouldn't really know."

I looked into her eyes; there was a wild oblivion over them, they were coated with music, icy with music. I realised what was cutting off her body from mine. It was a tissue of dance-music. She was still dancing in her mind; her feet made little tentative dance-steps. She was in the grip of something deeper than Jesus or myself, she was dancing to the divine thump of her blood. She was intoxicated with bad music, tin-cans, and the wheedling saxophone.

She came to hear me lecture to my class at the W.E.A. on the poetry of William Morris. I talked, as always, at twice the rate I should have. I walked up and down the narrow floor or sat on the table swinging my free foot, while my students listened with that bewildered frenzy of attention characteristic of the aspiring workman. Two Welshmen, railway labourers used to come to me after every lecture, and say passionately, "That was a new light." Then they would ask me if I believed in the materialistic conception of history. They greeted my denial each week with the same dumb pleasure, nodded excitedly to each other, and faded through a backcloth of smiles.

To these starved mentalities Knowledge was something mystical, a sacrament; an encyclopædia was to be handled with the reverence due to a Holy Book. One man of my class bought as a bargain, a pile of medical year-books of the eighteen-sixties, and laboriously collated out-of-date diagnoses. To them all Knowledge was an established body of granitic facts, a tangible dimension, to be approached with the primitive faith of Christians computing the mensuration of heaven's tenements.

There were the usual questions, utterly irrelevant.

"Would you say, sir, that William Morris or Thomas Payne was the most val-uable lib-er-ator of the pro-le-tariat?"

"Was William Morris for or against Sabotage?"

Muriel sat staring at me with derisive tenderness, her head between her hands, unmoving. "You are funny," she said downstairs.

"I know I don't lecture well, but . . ."

We strolled towards Victoria Park. I intended to get her to sit down somewhere inside its immense dung-fastnesses, and there to kiss her. But it looked so uncomfortable, so like salt in the moonlight, that I did no more than take her to a seat on the outskirts where we sat swept by headlights.

"Yes?" she said.

"You said you were going to reform me."

"Go on."

There is nothing harder than to break a discourse on sex's theory with a fact, a kiss.

I was just reaching the end of the sentence when I found we were almost back to the town.

"I love you," I said. I had stopped by the Metropolitan Police Station, its tiers of gloom loomed above me.

"Why here?" she complained. Then she began to laugh softly, interminably, a formless laugh. I hated her, I never wanted to see her again. She put her handkerchief back into the bag, there were no more giggles to wipe off. "Anyway I'll have to go home now." I felt panic at the thought of losing her.

"To-morrow," I begged.

Next night I took her down by the river. Among bamboos and mosquitoes love began. "Don't," was all she would say, wriggling all over like a wet dog as if she hoped to throw off my kisses like water. She was almost as strong as I, and far more strenuous. Between quarreling kisses we watched prawn-fishers raise nets of intricate gold up against their candles, the nets were on fire, they streamed with a gush of orange-gold, then only a few tattered sparks welled to them. We could hear the small bumps of the prawns against the woodwork. Hidden in grass we lay breathless till the boat drifted past. I of course took all the advantage I could of these enforced truces of silence. "Don't, don't," she hissed, and bit my ear.

It needed several nights. "I won't, I never will, never," she protested, my right hand locked for safety in her damp armpit while she rested.

Then five minutes afterwards, she asked me, "Why didn't you take me down Victoria Park that night, it would have saved a lot of time."

I was in love again. I had started, as I always do, from ennui, from a desire to talk; continued because I didn't know how to stop; now I adored her.

She paid for our teas in small icecream-soda cafés full of pale green frescoes and blistered mirrors. Buns and tea we lived on; and then went, by a hole on the left, through a hedge into one of the public parks shut for the night. Nobody ever interrupted us in our spacious moonlight, and she let me undress and dress her in portions as often as I wished. For I still had a maddening curiosity as to how women were put together, the moral unreality of clothes, and the impossible fact of nudity.

We rolled down grass-slopes naked, I with one eye on our retreat, she without any reserve of caution. I designed curious garters for her which she made very badly. "I don't mind sewing," she apologised, "but I know I'm not much good at it." All the time we weren't sufficiently alone for the privacy of kisses, I explained what was wrong with religion.

"You understand?" I asked.

"Everything you say. Of course you're right." She tried to run down the hill and stumbled near the bottom; her legs were too thick and short for such steep running. I picked her up, there was a green stain on her white silk dress. It was a new one that she had been rather proud of earlier in the afternoon. She wasn't put out, though I was uneasy at her clumsiness, and anxious to pass it off. "You can always give your clothes away," she said, and sat down.

"I don't believe you're a bit vain," I expostulated afterwards.

"O yes, I am. I sit and look at myself for hours. I keep

looking to see if I can find anything nice to show you. I think the small of my back's nice. I was looking at it this morning. I want to see if you like it as much. . . . Do you?"

"Yes," I said.

"I thought you would," she said complacently.

She wrote me letters minutely analysing the sensations of love. "But there's more, more, isn't there?" she would always put in the postscript. Was it to excite me or herself, I pondered. But it was merely incredulity.

She made me write down all the indecent words I knew, with their meanings attached; but she would not let me say them. "Ssh," she would exclaim in the middle of an open field, "someone might hear." We used to walk in the rain. "I'm so healthy," she remarked. We lay for an hour under an advertisement-board, some 5 by 6 feet, which had blown down and which I fixed up tent-wise against the trunk of a fig. Her back was soon sopping. "This stuff won't run," was all I could get out of her. I read Nietzsche to her; she listened smoothly, smiling intently. "Say you love me," she answered. We climbed fences and stole flowers.

"You don't believe in God?"

"No," she said, "not the littlest bit, not the littlest little bit." Decidedly, but as if the words meant nothing to her.

"Do you still say your prayers?" I continued.

"Yes," she said, and could not see that her acquired disbelief made this ridiculous.

"I've always said them, it puts me to sleep." And on this severely utilitarian basis she was allowed to keep them. She was too stupid to lie; I was young enough to take pride in my conversion of her.

She used to try to paint. She was copying *Bubbles*, achieving a surface of dingy slime. "Of course I don't expect to do it well, but it fills in time."

"What do you really like?"

"O," she said, and thought for a long time. "I *think* I like riding . . . and you, you dear, let's have some more buns. I've got the money, you're always asking questions."

She failed in all her examinations.

"I'll have to go home," she said. I went in the train for a few stations, and was astonished to find that I cried. "This is terrible, leaving you," I told her.

"O we'll meet again soon," she confessed her imbecile trust in life and myself. I was ashamed.

She wrote after a week or so. "Everything's all right, you'll be glad to hear. I was relieved too, though I knew everything would be all right. I've been riding all day, but I'd like to be with you."

I had a sudden thought. I wrote in reply among other things, "Have you confessed yet?"

She answered, truthfully, as I had anticipated, "Yes, I confessed to the priest the day before yesterday, he was so kind to me. I've been riding all day, I've such a sweet horse, I call him after you, but I'd much rather be with you."

(*To be continued.*)

SELECTED POETRY

HARVEST

THE eager harvest knives caress the grain
With glittering contentment as they cut,
While in the dust beneath a sluggish sun
In ceaseless whirr and clattering of wheels
Steal the far echoes of forgotten rain.

The dried ears fall, hard in the husk
The rattling seed, one more fleet season done;
And all once tender lissom grass
Is rusted wire beneath an autumn wind
Shredding the stagnant air at early dusk.

But the field, free now to abandon, lies
Naked; and, open to all soft voices,
Awaits the sighing spring, when men walk
Boundaries, with fertile cross erect, to bless
The humid soil, lit by lustful eyes.

Alec Brown

TO ANY COY FEMALE

HALF-COYLY curling its painted petals out
A new prize rosebud it is, your porcelain face,
And in the fluty music of your grace
Your lips are strident with their brassy shout;
And when your virginal features quit their pout
With such slick ease a soft smile takes its place
I'm a swine indeed if I allege I trace
Purpose in the way those bird eyes look about—

For, when you see my glance swoop like a swallow
To watch your hand tuck frock below your knee
Or when you hear my voice grow dry and hollow
Of course you don't think your body's aught to me,
That when I see your charms so condimented
My innards crave the tonic of your bed!

Alec Brown

THE VALLEY BY MOONLIGHT

"Pass them on," said the night priest,
Handing starry candles.
And the junipers
Twinkled with lights.
Distant hills too,
Floating on the billows of moonshine,
Bobbed their lanterns,
And the town below
Rode at anchor.

Richard Church

REASSURANCE

I watched you as you lay
Weary for no cause;
And as I went away
I stumbled on Love's laws
Forbidding the excess
Of brooding kindness,
Demanding nothing less
Than a conscious blindness.

I thought of you unsleeping,
Shrinking, fastidious,
Faithful in love, yet weeping,
Crying out on us,
Startled with quick fear,
As savage creatures start.
See, my wild love, here
Throbs freedom in my heart!

Richard Church

A TAVERN TRAGEDY

I DIDN'T hate him, not a bit . . .
As from your beer, just off the brim
You'd spill a midge and stamp on it,
My life repudiated him.

I'd never seen him once before.
He lurched in snivelling; he looked weak;
He propped himself against the door,
And as he breathed I heard it creak.

I had no need that he should live!
His sad glance shifted everywhere
So pitiful, so fugitive,
It seemed he staled the very air.

Then for one flickering broken phase
I forgot all things, in one blink,
How months on months, and days on days,
Had maddened me with rage and drink.

Some Thing within me startled, gazed
Upon him through my opened eyes,
And I looked on, dazed, merely dazed,
Half-heedless of my own surprise.

My hand leapt forth and snatched a knife . . .
Its broken edge was bent and brown . . .
O, I was sickened of his life!
He fell, fell from me crashing down. . . .

I didn't hate him . . . I don't know . . .
Without one sound, one word, one curse,
I gave one stab, one movement—so—
And spilt him from the universe.

E. J. Rupert Atkinson

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

An unreal world of paltry bric-a-brac,
Built of bamboo and paper. Cool, pale sun,
Wherein move fish-like squamous epicenes,
Filled with the Voice of God.

All day the Lord doles out their picture-postcards
Of sea-fronts, lakes or distant esplanades,
Mauve calendars and casual texts that seem
Answers to prayer.

Their flowers breathe benedictions. (Home-made jam,
Dainty embroidery, marmalade or cream—
Those things the Beauty of Holiness symbolise,
Things that their friends send them.)

All pictures, photographs, vases and plates
Sing in their sea-mew minds the echoing visions
Of all the deeds of all the souls they've known:
Whereof they've built their heaven.

The air goes rare amid their pickled chat.
Their trashy glimpses of the Unseen World
Slither and rot in some long-fœtid pool
Beside their own stale dreams of righteousness.

Gilbert Brooks

MEDITATIVE

Slow consciousness of age-inherited race
Peering open-eyed
Into flamboyant walnut-polished air.

When the voice speaks the mask is doffed
And naïve craft tenders its faulty eloquence
With sleek and unsuspicious care.

Ritual movements of the hands
Rise and subside: she sighs,
And (winged birds flashing out of a February bush,
White hair streaked on sombre feathers)
Her thoughts are instantly brisk, sharp and aware.

Dominant tenor (through the humming)
Rises to breathe from worlds of ancient kings
Slain and embalmed in distant orients:
(Alack, my countrymen,
And what a fall was there!)
Some dusky charioteer of thought
Flashes his bronze helm,
Brandishes the target of her eyes
And I, too, am aware.

Gilbert Brooks

CHILDBED

I have borne a daughter to the moon, said the Swan-Mother.
(On the green horizon the salt-marsh burns)
(Lust in the reeds and sheets on the sky-line)
I have known the winter that glasses the pool.

Ernest Milton

WESTMINSTER EMBANKMENT

On the Westminster Embankment Cleopatra's needle
Points at the sky outside the Hotel Cecil.
It is stared at by hollow iron lions
Of a more recent date, while
Egyptian reverberations all along the Embankment
Support the seats with winged tigresses.
Here beggars sit, sometimes spitting in spite of the notices,
And trams pass on either side of the trees.

And because of this tributary of the sea flowing through the city
Because of the conquests, the sacrifices by which electric light
Reveals to us the stone memory of this Egyptian queen,
The lamp-posts are coiled with dolphins,
Iron bay leaves and dolphin-mouths perpetually gaping.

And while Queen Boadicea rides against the Romans
Across a public lavatory, Westminster Abbey
Gathers its waves together in gothic displeasure.

Philip Henderson

OXFORD STREET

"Where are the eagles and the trumpets?"

No eagles swing in callous flight
Awaiting our decrepitude.

There'll be no myth of blazing towers.
No poet will ever cry in pain:
"High Selfridges is down, is down,
That once so proudly skyward threw
Its flaring challenge to the stars,
And nettles push between the stones
Where buses ran to Marble Arch."

The eagles loitered over Troy,
For Troy was built in blood and tears,
But Oxford Street was built in dirt,
And rats will tunnel Oxford Street.

A. L. Morton

IBERIAN

The images globed in your dark head,
Iberian,
Spring of an older race than mine.

My fantasy climbs laboriously back
To Helen,
Parvenu at Troy.
You, beyond knowing, know
Whence Troy was digged.

Tell me by night
In the whispered compact of thighs:
Wordlessly declare
What's carried in that round dark head,
Iberian.

A. L. Morton

SHE DANCES

Flame curtained with silken motion, you sway
In my arms: in a nosegay of melody you
Laugh and laugh till I answer like cymbal struck.
The night is latticed with violins—sober day,
Masqued as ardent midnight, leans to suck
Kisses from yielding music. Why is your shoe
Not crystal, princess, or grass and lilies plaited
With slim flax? For the flickering fall of your feet
(Not winged) is garbed in the divine of earth.
Colour and sound are slaves whose beauties, abated
In your young radiance, wildered with fleet
Loveliness, curtsy to minister you mirth;
And we move among them, languid in this
Delicate danger of dance, and parallel bliss.

Gilbert Highet

PERMANENT

I SHALL not sing these songs when I am dead.
No melodies will murmur in my tomb.
I shall not stir impatient in the womb
Of death. I shall be dreamless in that bed.
No rhythmical intention in my head
Will shake with throbs that skully silent gloom.
No colour will be quick in that bleak room.
Nothing will be, when blood will not be red.
Only one image can not perish, quite,
When everything has rotted, as it must:
A voice of music and a small face, white,
Will echo a sole beauty in my dust.
When I am unified with earth and stones
Your love will be a fragrance in my bones.

P. R. Stephensen.

LYSOL

by PHILIP LINDSAY

She sat before the looking-glass, closely examining the misery of her own white face. The great round brown eyes that had melted last night and run out down her soft cheeks, making little sodden grey stains upon the pillow. How she had cried! He didn't want to see her again, he didn't want . . . . Once more the hot tears filtered through the lids. She let them come, watching them slide in jerky little wriggles and jumps. Poor eyes! you had seen and felt a lot of crying last night. Again she read through his cruel note. But there was nothing burning now: only a dull sickness in her little belly, a cancer chewing away assiduously, eating up everything, leaving only emptiness, an emptiness that seemed to be continually inflating within, stretching her numbed brain to snapping-point.

'Dear Nelly,' he wrote . . . . he still said Dear, and why *would* he spell Nellé in that vulgar fashion? Was it simply to hurt her?

'Dear Nelly, It has been a huge mistake, a really terrible mistake, and one can only thank God that we have realised this in time . . .' The mocking irony of that We. 'You were never meant for me, nor I for you. This is terrible. For I do love you, Nelly, truly, truly, I love you . . .' O, these lies, inane, cruel lies! '. . . much more than you could possibly love me, or any man. But our two roads are different roads. We love with our bodies only—not our minds. You never really understood my ideas, my hopes. I am not blaming you for it, God forbid! but your way, Nelly, lies through a strange land that I know nothing of—the land of tea-parties and tennis-courts and drawing-rooms in Suburbia. I am both a hopeless artist and a hopeless man. Do you remember how disgusted you were when you first saw me drunk at Mervyn's party? You will always be like that, Nelly, and so will I. Find some decent, good chap, and you will be much happier. I can only muddy your name, disgrace you in the eyes of . . . .' No need to read the other lies, the strings and strings of lies. And she had believed him for a while! she had been very weak. She was a silly. But last night, Florrie had told her . . . . he and Pamela together. Pamela! chubby, flossy-haired dumpy little girl. What could any boy see in her—and Ronald of all boys! Ronald, who had always said that he liked happy girls, who showed their gums and teeth in laughter, girls who danced last night's jazz steps as they walked, girls who—. Lies, lies, every one of them, lies, dirty, cruel lies. All these men were the same, they smoodged to a girl, fooled her with their kisses, and then tired of her. . . . Pamela with slow fat legs, the quiet, dog-like brown eyes, expressionless, the round placid face. The type that Ronald had once always laughed at—simply because she herself was exactly the opposite. She saw a hundred little things now that she had not noticed before. Anybody except Pamela.

Mechanically, she began combing straight her bobbed hair. Why was she taking any care of her looks now? Life held nothing for her: it was but a drab screen of tiresome duties, eating, talking, working. There was no more fun left. She dropped the comb, and stayed placidly staring at her long fingers, at the nails that were like shiny pink beetles as the light tapped twinkling on them. She could remember Ronald smiling, he was always smiling, his boisterous laugh, the tender mockery of his voice. Their love had been all madness, too exciting, it could not last. Fancy Pamela though, Pamela, who stared at one like a dog the while, never saying anything, and even when she did she seemed surprised, as though she were a clairvoyant and a ghost were talking through her red mouth, that was round and formless, like a crushed geranium on the white flesh. She was sluggish, her eyes held no spark of thought, she was simply a bloated doll. And Ronald was always running, it seemed, never still, even when talking, throwing his arms about and his head back.

What was the use of living? the use of anything? Idly she fingered the purple bottle of lysol used for washing her mouth and for other, more feminine hygienic ablutions. She loosed the cork and smelt the heavy vapour. They say it burns one's stomach insideout. That would hurt. She could imagine it corroding away slowly, blazing within like terribly strong brandy—and even that had nearly burnt her mouth to ribbons when Ronald had given her some at that last party. Her stomach would rot to spider-webs. It would be ghastly. But there was no other possible alternative, save living, and living was now more ghastly still. To see Ronald with Pamela, laughing and talking with her, knowing all the while what was going on outside in the park or in his room. That day, a million years ago it seemed, when she had climbed those rickety stairs for the first time, with his arm as sure prop about her waist, now and then giving her little kidneys a tingling squeeze with his fingers. The dirty plaster walls, covered with nude drawings: she had never believed before that girls *really* posed like that—without even tights! And the men! She stole another sly glance at the men while pretending to peer into an innocuous landscape. He had torn her dress (a perfectly new dress, too). They were both hot with struggling. She had been a fool. He had got her too easily. And his was not the nature that could stay true to one girl for long.

The lysol bottle invited her with its shimmering purple glass, its drowsy heaviness as though the liquid were smouldering there, patiently waiting to burn her gullet to a floating sieve. Ronald would be sorry when he heard. The girl who died for love. That would make a good title for a book: The Girl Who Died For Love. And she thought of all those tired serious ones before her who had faced the harbour or the poison because their first glimpse of life had frightened them. Those adolescent souls who longed and were too weak to believe or to attain, searching for the justice that is nowhere. Those hundreds of young girls and women who had writhed in lonely beds because they feared to face the Good Man's laws; because shame and

mockery are the birthright of youth and of love. The despairing ecstasy of loving unloved. She crushed the purple bottle in her white hands, and with a whimpering cry half-raised it to her lips, but feared to gulp.

She was still crying when Cora swung herself in on the door-knob. 'Baby, Baby Custard,' she laughed. 'What's up, Nell?'

Nellie industriously blew her tiny turned-up nose and rubbed her wet eyes. 'Nothing at all,' she said defiantly. 'I'm perfectly all right.'

'Now, now.' Cora sat sympathetically on the arm of her chair. 'Not about that fool Ronnie, is it?' she asked.

The sound of the name immediately produced another cataract of tears.

Cora patted her bent back. 'Don't be silly, my dear,' she entreated. 'I don't see what you've got to worry about him for. I never could see anything in him myself.'

Nellé was past talking: tears were all her words. She gulped into her lap, trembling hands on knees.

'Come on out for a walk. Down to the beach. It's lovely and warm and moonlight. Catch some other boy. There's plenty of a million times better ones. I don't know what you've got to worry about *him* for: he never even brushes his hair, he's terrible untidy. I think you're well rid of him myself.'

'Go away,' said Nellé in a muffled voice as though she were speaking into a paper-bag. 'Leave me alone. . . .'

'Oh, come on, you don't want to mope like this. I saw Don a minute ago: he's a better chap than Ronnie, now.'

'Go away . . . I hate you . . .' Her voice was squeaky with sobs. 'Leave me alone. . . .'

'What have *I* done. If you don't want a little sympathy—O, but I understand, Nellé, but do try and be your old silly self again. Come on out for a walk, go on.'

'I . . . I . . . dooon't want to walk.'

'I saw Ron and Pam down there. Come on, Nell, show him that you don't care twopence for him. That'll hurt him if nothing will. Just show him what he's gone and lost. Come on. Do yourself up lovely and cut him stone dead. That'll get him going—you just see.'

'But . . . but we mightn't see him.'

'O, he'll be mucking up out there for a good while yet. You know what he's like. He won't let Pam go for hours and hours and hours, no matter what she says. Give him a fine knock-back: he's terrible conceited.'

'Do . . . do you really think it . . . it'll hurt him?'

'Of course it will, you mad fool. He expects you to be weeping like a broken-down cistern. Show him that you don't care a damn.'

Slowly, Nellé raised her head and gazed hopelessly into her own red-rimmed brown eyes in the mirror.

'A lot of rotten good I'd do, going out like this,' she said bitterly.

'O, you can easily fix that up. Come, I'll do it.'

Cora fussed excitedly about the dressing-table, upsetting boxes, spilling bottles, and buzzing away cheerfully to herself.

'Just a weeny bit of red on the lips, just the weeniest, tweeniest little bit. And the eyes—where *is* the powder! I'll make you prettier than ever. There's no lily like a painted lily. That's what the barber said to me yesterday when I got this shingle. What do you think of it? Ducky, isn't it? Why don't you get yours done? Bobbed looks so antique these days, so old-fashioned. He's a dirty dog, isn't he, that barber! He put the acid on me again. I just grinned and told him to have a bath, which he does need, by the way. And he said if I'd only go out with him, he'd give me hundreds of scents and powders, and cut my hair for me every day for nothing. But I'm not having any. He's too greasy: not for all the scents in the world. And of course, I've got Tommy. I missed him last night. I wonder what he'll have to say about that? Something terrible, I suppose. I think I told you we were going to spend the day at Dee Why yesterday, me and Babs and Amy. Such a wonderful time, my dear, but the surf was rather boisterous: knocked me to Jericho. I nearly went mad trying to get away in time to see Tommy. Informed our hostess a thousand times we had to leave early, and do you think she'd get a wriggle on with the tea? No! Damn her, *she* wasn't in any hurry at all, so we had to just grin and bear it. Eight P.M. when we left, and I had to see Tommy at seven! Just dog-tired we were, so soon retired to our own little cots. Met damn Bill Tinker on the Manly wharf, but as we were feeling wild with the world in general, he only got a curt little nod . . .'

Trancelike, Nellé listened. It refreshed her, brought her back to the little happenings of life that had once been so tremendously important and funny. She could hardly believe that they were alive, all these people that Cora was chattering about: Babs and Amy and the barber and Tommy and others. And all the while her face was changing beneath the tender, industrious hand of Cora. The eyes lost their dark rims and seemed once more active in their slots; her lips grew fuller and redder; her colour returned; slowly every feature seemed to change. Nellé was being reborn.

'Now,' cried Cora, standing back, closing one eye and holding her right hand up to her face, the other still reaching forward with the powder-puff in a fencing attitude. 'Now you're lovely.'

And looking into her own brown eyes, Nellé had to confess that she really *was* lovely. She poked her pointed chin up, and stared interestedly as though she would examine the very pores of her white throat for the mysterious recipe of its beauty, the elusive unity of charm that binds small nose and mouth together and spreads evenly over the square inches of undistinguished skin. She smiled, so as to see the rows of glistening teeth, and poked out her tongue like the tip of a red devil's cap and drew it slowly in again, squeezing all the moisture from it between the white teeth, leaving a ragged streak of dirty white down its pink back. She nodded her head from side to side, the hair sliding down as a screen for its paleness. Yes, she was lovely.

'He'll leave that tubby Pamela when he sees you,' said Cora

wisely, poking out her lower lip and nodding her fair head, sending the gold curls rustling.

Still, with narrowed eyes, Nellé gazed back at herself in the mirror as though this were a stranger that she was seeing for the first time.

'Come on,' urged Cora. 'It's getting late.'

They slipped out quietly.

'I'm just going for a walk with Cora, mum,' Nellé called into the front bedroom.

'All right, don't be late, mind,' came her mother's fat voice with the industrious rustle of newspaper.

The street greeted them with a pleasant wave of pure sweet air. Arms about each other's waists, they strolled idly along kicking their heels into the turf, and watching the dignified progress of a full moon through the dusty blue sky. Wisps of cloud, like frosty breath, swam in the dark waters above, and a million tiny stars spluttered, like light seen through a decaying sheet of canvas. The houses were very still with one or two baleful square eyes, animals crouching ready to spring.

The two girls strolled silently through half-a-dozen streets, meeting nobody whom they knew. Only at one corner, two lounging boys stopped their chatting and smoking to stare hungrily as they passed. 'What a pair of legs,' they heard one of them say, and the other, 'How'd you like to sleep with her, Dan?' But, of course, they pretended that they had not heard a word. On, down dead streets, but now they had ghostly company, for two pairs of feet tramped behind them, echoing on the pavement in that silence like anvil-blows, and two male voices talked abnormally loudly and laughed a great deal about subjects in which neither had any interest whatsoever, but which sounded impressive.

'I wonder if they'll really speak to us or only follow?' whispered Cora excitedly.

Nellé did not answer, but she squeezed her arm in sympathy. Would they? She strained her ears to listen to those steps, like Fate following, following. She was lost in the intoxication of the moment. For the time being she had forgotten Ronald and Pamela and the purple lysol bottle. There were only those steps with which her heart kept painful time.

Now they were down at the beach. Here the pursuers would have every opportunity to speak if they really intended to. But boys were all such hopeless cowards. . . . As they passed each seductive shop-window, Cora would enumerate the various articles that caught her hungry eye. 'Boots . . . Shoes . . . Cake . . . Chocolates . . . Flowers . . . Scent . . . Millinery . . . Hats . . . Prawns . . .'

'I hope you don't mean us by that,' said a cheeky voice beside them.

They both turned quickly, surprised and contemptuous. 'No,' said Cora crushingly, hopefully. 'I like prawns *very* much.'

'I do wish you'd like us, too,' said the freckled one, who had spoken before, and he laughed, displaying heavy teeth that were obviously false and looked primitive, 'because we're both in love—.'

'Come on, Nell.' Cora took hold of her friend's arm again, and they continued leisurely on their way.

'—with you,' concluded the cheeky, freckled one, stepping beside Cora. Silently, as though on sentry, the other boy slipped next to Nellé, who pretended aloofly that he was not there, noting out of the corner of one sly brown eye that he was very sunburnt and very tall—both attractive qualities.

'Now,' said the freckled one to Cora, 'do be nice and sociable. Do you live about here?'

Cora feigned deafness.

'Come on,' he prompted. 'Where *do* you live, my dear?'

'Far enough away from *you*, that's all,' returned Cora austerely.

'I think we'd better go home now, Nell,' she added, and strolled into a dark street.

Immediately, the freckled one took her arm insidiously, and his sunburnt companion, like a true sentry, immediately took Nellé's. She had the impression for a moment that she was arrested.

Cora broke down before such confidence. 'Well, *you're* a pair of roughs,' she giggled, 'bailing us up like this.'

'Well, we had to get you somehow, sweetheart.' His arm was now around her waist, and the sunburnt one, with a quick glance behind to see if he really were obeying orders correctly, immediately followed his example.

Suddenly he broke hoarsely through the clogged silence. 'Beautiful night,' he said.

Nellé burst into hysterical laughter that came throbbing out of its own accord as though she had lost all control of her mind and body, as though someone else were laughing through her. 'Do you think so?' she giggled.

'Here, I say. . . .' He was bewildered, embarrassed. 'Really, my dear . . . I say.'

'What's your name?' came the freckled lad's voice. 'Mine's Dan: he's Charlie.'

Charlie clutched Nellé firmly; she was shaking, her breath coming in short painful gasps. 'Ooo, you're funny,' she giggled.

Up to the Bondi cliffs they went, the girls protesting, the boys, or rather Dan, obdurate. Charlie was still the sleeping partner. But once that they were in that world of wind on the heights, he became very active. Nellé was the sleepy one then, the silent one. He whispered and kissed, and pressed his hot face against hers, rubbing it up and down her soft cheeks. She felt the soft bristles like a nail-brush tickling her flesh; she opened her eyes only to see his eyes in the chocolate face staring tenderly, hungrily, at her, as though they had dissolved to electricity in their sockets and pierced into her mind. Nellé felt the old hysterical laughter trembling within her, but she choked it down. Then she remembered Ronald and Pamela, and thought of them together like this, and it pulsed a new strength into her kiss, so that Charlie felt her passive lips on his slowly swell open, drawing his lips in as though her mouth were suddenly a thirsty vacuum eager to suck him all into herself.

When she got home again, Nellé crept into her own little room through the back door, so that mother would not see, and sat still before her looking-glass, contemplating herself, her chin upon her wing-spread palms as though that lovely head were some exotic flower rising from the white sepals of her wrists. She smiled, showing strong even teeth. Her brown eyes were alive with new mischief; she tossed her brown head and smiled at herself. On the way back, they had passed Ronnie saying good-night to Pamela, and how Ronnie's eyes had stared! And dumpy Pamela! Nellé picked up the purple lysol bottle that was lying over on its side. She would leave it in the bathroom in future. Not that there was any chance again. No, but she always used it there; and here it reminded her, winking at her . . . besides, she must have a wash before bed . . . she was filthily dirty.

She got up and stole into the bathroom with her own secret joy shining out through her brown eyes.

"SOCIETY"

by E. J. RUPERT ATKINSON

Staid sires of maids divine, they strut, rotund,
Climax of culture and peace, these fatted magnates,
Who wallow through the towns their torpor stagnates;
In whom remains some virtue moribund,
Since at their heels, though with convention shunned,
They dare parade, luscious from cars and cabs,
Correct, spruce, dignified, their ornate drabs,
Superb with all their venal bulk has dunned.

Her one need is that he should prostitute her:
Why praise him? Smile with his proud wife, who, knowing
Him and his petted bias, taking cover
In prudish crazes (suffragism would suit her)
Sweetly ingenuous ever, on her own showing,
Rejuvenates her face and bilks—her lover.

PÆAN

IN HONOUR OF THE NOBLE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, WHEREIN WAS FORMED BY A STRAYED REVELLER THE LAST OF THE CHORYBANTS

by ROBERT NICHOLS

"*A citizen of no mean city.*" St. Paul.

I LIKE Los Angeles
It contains Aimée Semple Macpherson,
Who washes the human sheep
In a convenient dip;
Whereby they emerge chastened
And (for a while) immaculate
To sing Hosannas,
Wave handkerchiefs
And, in orgiastic sanctity
Of religious choribantics,
Variously salute
The Eve-angelical exaltation,
The uplifted timbrel,
The neatly-netted tresses,
The bib-and-tucker chiton,
The wailings, beseechings,
Denunciations, furies,
Soul-scarifying devotions,
Red-hot homilies,
Candied confessions,
Prayerful ecstasies,
Obscure incantations
Of Aimée Semple Macpherson.
Aimée Adorable,
Semple Seraphical,
Macpherson Mesmerical,
(Likewise Medicinal)
AmSempMac Alliterative,
Scourge of Smokers,
Knell of the Hip-Flask,
Just Judge of Jazz-Juniors,
Thug of Freethinkers,
Buckler of Bryan,
Cure of the Costive,
Sole-remaining arch-priestess
(But with breast and hams covered)
Of the original ju-ju
High-stepping, timbrel-shaking,
Frenziedly dancing
Divine Bacchus!

Does the god, I wonder,
Remembering past worship,
Duly thankful for
Present small mercies,
Fondly gazing
On Aimée Semple Macpherson,
By obscure fermentation
Transmute the grape-juice
She imbibes to a potion
More strictly spiritual?
Impossible! Yet how does
The lady do it?

Compassionate Bacchus!
Complaisant Aimée!
Were you to leave us
Belov'd Los Angeles
Would doubtless be wiser
Yet alas, also
Could but be distinctly
Sadder, much sadder.
Horribly sadder!
Pæan to Bacchus!
Pæan to Aimée!
Sabazios! Sabaoth!
Io Bromios! Glory! Glory!

Dear Aimée Semple (also Macpherson)!—
I do so like her:
She is so old fashioned.

A NOTE ON ELIOTH GRUNER

Little known outside Australia, he is its only great landscapist. All his work owns a finely deliberated lyricism, a soft and clear delicacy of power. The earlier work, as reproduced in this issue, shows an absorption of all the lessons of impressionist and *plein-airiste*, but not for mere separate fleeting effects: he unifies with a Corot-analysis of edges and personal harmonies of colour and design, basing his perception in the maddeningly subtle crystal of Australian dawn, and finally succeeding in capturing light as a kind of *perfume* radiating—now adding more clarified design, weight of mass, and reach of rhythm. The deep scorn for all external values which he expresses as "modesty," allowed him, a short while past, to spend two years on this side without showing any of his work, even privately.—(J. L.)

WASTE OF TIME

OR, T. S. ELIOT OF BOSTON

A Yawn by Jack Lindsay

I an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces . . .
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I want to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
How should I use it for your closer contact?

[*Gerontion*]

I had intended to write this at great length, very subtly, exposing the thin shivers of fear behind each preciosity of the would-be pure intellectual-classicist. I said: I shall take T. S. Eliot to pieces and show how each pretence at scholarly balance, at sophisticated sensibility, only succeeds in wincing closer to the central emptiness down which he is afraid of falling if he once faces the treacherous dynamism of life—each little dictum a drag-anchor pretending to be the Rock of Ages in the stormy conflict of reality. So I re-read his works—not in bits as one normally does, but *en bloc*. The result is that I can't be bothered to carry out my intention.*

The few hours necessary for reading his *Opera* have left me with a dwindling image of his personality. So strong is the mythopœic faculty in us (*cf.* Blake's demonizing of Scholfield) that I find I had been building up in my mind an image of Eliot as pure-intellect incarnate (? discarnate), steely, nervously impeccable, relentlessly logical — a tinny Moloch of the aspiring youth of the nineteen-twenties. In fact he is merely a talented versifier, and a middling academic; and the only puzzle is: Where is the extreme failure in the English poetic consciousness which made possible his assumption of the Supreme poetic Head of Superior (refined) Critics as opposed to J. C. Squire's Kingship of the beefy Hoi Polloi of Letters—playing Pope to the latter's temporal dominion?

The only answer I can see is that the Georgian Nature-poets and Baby-poets and Dog-poets, etc., fulfilling the pre-Raphaelite and Decadence epochs by their apparent revolt against them (being what D. H. Lawrence would call the *antis*,† the devolu-

* Aldous Huxley has defined admirably in Chellifer in *These Barren Leaves* the poor futile minor poets so oppressed by the ruthless ugliness of the world that they retire into some compensatory fantasy—pure æstheticism, pure intellectuality, pure aloofness or condescension—all nothing but fear. In my intended article I would have pointed out how this type looking back on history (through the spectacle of text-books) sees each period ticketed neatly with its Zeitgeist and cannot understand why his own period does not hand him a rubber-stamped destiny telling him exactly what gesture and style is expected of him. Not getting this, he decides that his own period must be chaotic, purposeless, himself pathetically plumped by a malicious Fate in the only period which isn't a Period. And so on.

† See his splendid article on Galsworthy in Edgell Rickword's *Scrutinies*—the only intelligent book of criticism published for years. Every contributor (except perhaps the writer on Moore) goes straight to the point without any critical humbug. Lawrence and W. J. Turner (on Shaw) are particularly good. The book, needless to say, has been nicely ignored by the Press. It should be read.

tionary complement, of inflated Romanticism), so depressed the poetic mind of England such as it was that they made it inevitably descend one step further. Consequently we get T. S. Eliot and the other Disillusionists (raised on an -ism behind the Gasworks) who are in fact the *antis* of the Fin de Siècle Poets, the last collapse of Swinburneanism. The assumed formal revolt is only a childish disguise. Spiritually T. S. Eliot is the end of the line beginning with Swinburne's *Ex Voto*, etc., etc., passing through versifiers like Dowson and Middleton, singing of the shortness of all pleasures, the hectic hopelessness of life, the withering of rose-petals and the evaporation of the wettest of boozy kisses on the cheek of the belovèd.

What else could be the progeny of these pale "pagans"? They obviously could only produce a genuinely final evaporation of the senses themselves from the mummified body, the emergence of the disillusioned intellect now freed from even the tiredest desire to fling rose-petals at Soho Jewesses. If we are to choose, Dowson is far superior to Eliot, because drinking with cabdrivers and writing consumptive and prettily vowelled verses to day-dreams of more-than-Roman whores are at least human attainments, adolescently so no doubt but at least relatable to some part of the experience of living. But to define the same condition of mind *without* a background of drunken cabdrivers and a foreground of motion-picture vamps is to have all the disadvantages and none of the redeeming nonsense. Eliot is only a more sophisticated, less human Dowson. For he is also the last Earnest Parson with Serious Doubts induced by reading biological textbooks.

We see the disembowelled Dowson in the way his work gets thinner and thinner. At first he was still Dowson enough to be waggish in a very O of course aloof and curate fashion. O yes he too knew all about life, how sad and empty, at least at second hand. He wasn't scared to admit that whores and soot and slums exist. But how *frightfully* sensitive he was about it all, brave like a stern-eyed curate, and *so* penetrating.

> And I have known the arms already, known them all—
> Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
> (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
> Is it a perfume from a dress
> That makes me so digress
> Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
> And should I then presume?
> And how shall I begin? [*Love Song of Prufrock*]

As he was Modern, he didn't write denunciatory satire; it was necessary to satirise obliquely—show how beauty and significance had passed because there were rich Jew tourists in Venice, and gasworks at the rainbow's end. His sentimental version of Ecclesiastes oozes with inverted prettiness—all the pose of a timid drab mind before life, getting in first with his repudiation. He contrasts the modern Thames and the Elizabethan Splendour,* just like any other sentimentalist;

* As if Shakespeare didn't have as much dirt and ugliness to confront as Eliot! As if he didn't have a hell of a lot more. But then he hadn't read Swinburne or Darwin; he was merely faced with a human hell.

but because he does it in shorthand it looks hard and brilliant, when it is only slop and none the less slop for being meagre slop.

In the same way we can correlate his critical method with that of Arthur Symons; he is the *anti*, the degenerate half of that writer. Consider them both on the subject of Baudelaire.* The former is concerned almost wholly with the wicked poet, the self-conscious sinner, the jewelry of symbolism, the benzoin and the bizarrarie of snakish or putrefying lovers and philosophies of Ennui and obsessions with images of torment such as that (unrealistic) of thwartedly sweating Lesbians going down to Hell in pendular patterns of impotence. Baudelaire the Romanticist.

Eliot on the other hand sees nothing but metrical mastery and the belief in God which is necessary for the belief in exotic damnations. Exploring the torments of this Oidipos-complex poet he sees only the mathematical rigidity of his concept of Deity. Baudelaire therefore is viewed as a severe and intellectual poet. Baudelaire the Classicist.

Both points of view of course are unaware of Baudelaire the Individual, or his genuine creative conflict, with its recession into the laziness of fear, his tortured hatred of the sexual struggle which he could not integrate and out of which he made a taut image of his own onanistic self-terror. But Symons at least comes somewhere near the fact. The adolescent colouring of his perception does not altogether vitiate it; and it has at least a boyish gusto, redeeming Sin from theology by making it a jolly fancy-dress-ball affair.

But Eliot, his perception does not reach even the surfaces, his preconceptions are as inert as the moral criteria of the worst of professorial essayists.

Has Eliot given us anything positive at all? Has he stated anything beyond a fear of death? A feebly corrective intellectualistic viewpoint (borrowed from Valéry) dwindling more and more to a kind of Calvinistic Roman Catholicism (!) and a few formal experiments that are exemplified far better in the at least gargantuan hurly-burly of *Ulysses* or the technical modulations of Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell. Always nothing but a thin terror, and from fear of death come all rottenness and abstractions ghosting life—"fear of death is the source of all lovelessness," Richard Wagner says. T. S. Eliot says:—

> Let me be no nearer
> In death's dream kingdom
> Let me also wear
> Such deliberate disguises. [*The Hollow Men*]
>
> The ague of the skeleton;
> No contact possible to flesh
> Allayed the fever of the bone.
> [*Whispers of Immortality*]
>
> Fear death by water.
> I see crowds of people walking round in a ring
> Thank you. [*The Waste Land*]

* I take the hint but not the moral of this comparison from an article by Peter Quennell.

The *Waste Land* has 21 pages of poetry and 7 pages (small type) of explanatory notes.

I sum up then. Eliot is not modern. He has no sense of the problems of this age. The new impulse into Tragedy, the new delicate sense of subjective values, the new passionate scepticism, which hold the creative potentialities of the post-war epoch, are altogether unknown to him. He is the last remnant of the pre-war generation, disillusioned further by the war, frightened of life, desperately but unconsciously expressing this fear in an effort to castrate life of its dangers by the blade of intellectualism. But it is not Life, it is Eliot, who is thereby eased. He is the tincan tied to the tail of the disillusioned Nineties.*

Meanwhile he goes on becoming more efficiently spectral, *seriously* considering Bishops and Uplift-Anglo-Catholicism (in a phrase from Joyce, Imperthnthnthnthnthn) and the Action Française and Classicism and God and Maritain (his only real rival for the position of absolute puer(il)ity). The shell hardens, but miraculously at the same time it thins. Every issue of the *Criterion* it is heard retreating into indefinable distances of imperturbable superiority. Indefinable, because it has so few human characteristics. It it not vulgar, it is far below vulgarity, which presupposes some sort of vitality. It is not particularly unjust, because the world of its values is so fantastically aloof, so void of bowels, that it is hardly aware of the vital world which makes its existence so ineffably ridiculous. Some day it will simply disappear, with a faint stench of tin. The more I write about it, the less I can believe in its existence at all. So I end.

No, I don't. There's still some space left, so here goes:

Let Boston bloomer-buried come
Baedeker-boobed to the Museum
Sophisticated pates scoff dumb
The antique prestige—let us flee 'em.

To where the ghost of Hercules
Wailing the momentary hero
Reads *Valéry* and set at wheeze
Improves his accent down to zero.

O hell! but listen, there's a joke:
The inferiority-complex'd provincial
Aiming at culture quintessential
Imposes at one weary stroke
On those he means to ape and impress
His pseudo-sophisticatedness.

---

* What is the development shown between

From too much love of living
From hope and fear set free, etc.

and

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

There is no development; only a change in idiom—one abstract pessimism for another.

CONTRAPUNTALS

An Essay in Amiable Criticism

by P. R. STEPHENSEN

Point: Aldous Huxley, who is possessed of or by the most honest, if diabolical, capacity for human analysis at present functioning on Earth, having just achieved a work which pillories a whole epoch, sparing nobody—and himself least—; having just achieved the most truthful piece of uncommon or non-garden fiction in English since *Antic Hay* (Huxley being *sui generis*), has already been put on Ice by the critics, labelled as unoriginal, "derivative" or something, by the gossiping hall-porters of Olympos—whom God blast!—because as they hasten to indicate, he has used one trick of Gide's in exposition.

Counterpoint: And what of it? Externals being all that the Critics are paid to see in a work, naturally they, O so original themselves, must of necessity say of an original work that it is unoriginal, to preserve their bum-Olympian poise and pose; just as they say Norman Lindsay cannot draw because he is the supremest living draughtsman, and no doubt they would say of Shakespeare, were He contemporary, that He is an indifferent poet, derived from Kyd, like Lindsay is derived from Beardsley and Huxley derived from Gide or somebody, because their function and their job is to pad humanity's trousers against the kicks of a ferocious kicker of posteriors like Huxley. Thus the opinion of the critics will merely confirm Huxley's main thesis that Intellectuals frustrate themselves in a centrifugally developing futility and hopelessness——

Point: ——Huxley himself being *a priori* included; which he at least, confound his self-honesty, recognises.

Counterpoint: Well, recognition of this particular kind is generally indicative of the desire to get out of the bag's bottom; and perhaps P. C. P. has now cleared the way in Huxley's own mind for an affirmatory human synthesis, in which case it will be much more than a flash of lightning on a dunghill.

Point: Does he really hate his characters? Are these futile people photographs, caricatures, or sheer fantasy-projections? Why need he concern himself with the dull world of Michael Arlen grown more culpable because a little more self-conscious and erudite?

Counterpoint: Because these are all he knows. He has been all round the world without quitting the stateroom of his own mind, the first-class cabin of his eremitic and privileged experience. If he thinks all humanity has been to Oxford and/or has an income and/or goes to Sbisa's and/or is futile because intellectually self-conscious, then put the man down and comeanaveadrink. But if he is right, if after mature deliberation, he is satisfied that it is necessary to rewrite the *Cherry Orchard* kind of thing in English——

Point: Then raise the Scarlet Standard high.

Counterpoint: But he abhors Communism.

Point: Then let him espouse Fascism.

COUNTERPOINT: But equally he abhors Fascism.

POINT: Then let him leave the Political Illusion alone. We already have Mr. Wells.

COUNTERPOINT: But he has advanced so far beyond Mr. Wells. He recognises at least that Science is a general and (confound his honesty) a personal escape from Actuality.

POINT: Then let him state actuality as spirit, to the further discomfiture of the laboratory savants, most particularly of Oliver Lodge and Eddington, who are trying to do this Scientifically. Let him reconstruct the Earth in beauty and in delight with poetry if he mistrusts the abstract ratiocinating faculty (for *Leda* is still in the fabric of this mind); or in laughter, if he accepts the fact of living as a necessary but ridiculous activity (is *Antic Hay* relegated to *Limbo*?). We do not need a Huxley to tell us in the void that capital S Science is out-moded. We need a new Huxley to take the Sigh out of Science with poetry and laughter. Because this may be the significance of P. C. P.'s destructiveness, the book may yet be one of the most significant vomits ever vomited by a sobering belly.

COUNTERPOINT: But that is personal and insulting . . .

POINT: So is Huxley . . .

COUNTERPOINT: This is a serious book. Painfully serious. There is none of the lyrical ecstasy of *Leda* and not much of the puckish flippancy of *Antic Hay*. It merely carries intellectual self-consciousness to the point of despairing of the intellect.

POINT: So did Beethoven, without whom this book of Huxley's could not have reached a conclusion. ("Almost thou persuadest me," he whispered. "But it's *too* good.") Then Huxley really knows Beethoven's way!

COUNTERPOINT: Women destroy his men . . .

POINT: They always destroy Intellectuals. There is no escape from this, equally no use being depressed about it. At least he has stated the fact as unsparingly as ever it has been stated in modern literature. The Matriarchy is in full sway. He has stated the fact with characteristic ruthlessness. But of course he has not solved it. There is no solution, no arbitration possible in this tug-o-war between the body's children and the images of the mind . . . except that a creative mind needs woman for *his* purposes, and cannot satisfactorily be used by a woman for hers. Then, after all, Huxley is still interested in Woman-as-such. In a world of literary eunuchs, perverts, inverts, and onanists, he is still concerned with the normal subtleties of sex. He is one of the few, perhaps the last great English novelist not bogged in the mire of psychopathia sexualis. He is the last heterosexual Englishman of first-grade Intelligence. For this last Mohican procreation still holds the possibilities of creation, once obvious. So they say he is too bald.

COUNTERPOINT: But his unsentimentality! He is more than cynical; he is brutal, hurtful, masochistic. . . . Little Phil dies in convulsions which are too outrageous. . . . Lucy's letter to the miserable Walter is more than a tigressly feminine revenge . . . this approaches atavism. . . .

POINT: Then the Earth is a blood-puddle, heigho! For this kind of thing a man has to be prepared. But Huxley is not

more cruel to us than he is to himself. These torturings searing the hide of the greatest living unsentimentalist only mean that he is now obliged to face the welter of pain as well as the intellect's hopelessness.

COUNTERPOINT: And this was the problem before Beethoven, who found a solution; and before Rabelais, who found a solution . . . and Huxley can intuit Beethoven, he can even intuit Rabelais. Then need he go via D. H. Lawrence to Dostoievsky? Need he succumb to the modern evil and itch when he, with a few, can conquer it?

UNISON: (*allegretto*). *May it please your Aldousity to give us a return in Literature of the Beethoven Quartets or of Panurge! Now that you've done it so thoroughly this rotten earth does not need to be kicked to bits any more. A new Earth, we pray, not a blacker inferno!*

* * * * *

POINT: (*tremolo*): and if he fail——

COUNTERPOINT: (*andante ma non troppo*): Oh, never mind. Then this book will merely have been the most Barren Leaf fallen from decaying wood in Autumn, Nineteen Twentyeight, Anno Diaboli.

MODERNISTIC ANNOTATION

by WILLIE WAGSTAFFE

IF E. E. CUMMINGS HAD WRITTEN A VERSE OF THE PSALM OF LIFE AND LAURA RIDING AND ROBERT GRAVES HAD ANNOTATED IT.

Li—
feis
Re Al
Li fe i sear
nestand
theG rave
I snot it sgo Al
Dustt houa rtto du stret
UrN est wa
snot spok eno
fthe soUl

COMMENTARY: Note the division of 'life,' showing how life is divided against itself, while the running together with 'is' suggests the immanence of Time (Being interpenetrating Matter). The philosophic vista opened up by dividing Real into Re (Latin, meaning 'in the matter of'—the Latin suggests Thomas Aquinas) and Al (old spelling of All—again the mediæval colouring) need not be stressed. In the next line 'life' is still split, but the fact that the two fragments (subject and object) are more proximate shows that we are getting nearer to an intellectual synthesis, while 'i' (the individual purified from the arrogance of domination—I) combines with 'sear' to define the rending of the sensitive mind by life. Note, too, how 'sear' combines and arrests the open vowels of the

preceding words, with the predominant consonants s (soft, out-going) and r (hard, recoiling)—also the secondary implication of 'seer.'

'Nestand' (a skilful suggestion of mediæval Miracle-plays by the archaic ending '-and' for the present participle) gives the first hope of escape, of comfort; but the fierce 'theG' (the capital G at once suggesting God) comes in (also suggesting thug and keg [of rum], therefore drunkenness) so that the brusque command 'rave' arrives exquisitely timely. The human ego naturally responds angrily with 'I snot' (*i.e.* 'is not' [*cf.* Hegel's definition of Being and Non-Being as identical])—God broken up into the human constituents: 'I' the spirit and 'snot' the body. The result is the objective world: 'it.' To this the mind replies 'sgo Al' which (echoing 'snot') becomes 'no go, All!'—*i.e.* 'It's no use, God' (showing that Is-not or Nothing is really All, or Totality). Anger now becomes predominant and the order 'rave' is remembered in a series of rattling sounds like shaken bones mixing with an owl's cry ('houa'). After this *danse macabre* we tumble into the significant 'UrN'—the small 'r' showing that resistance has ceased. The Latin 'est' (returning to the philosophic theme of what is 'is') suggests a tomb-inscription. Scepticism retorts with 'wa' a truncated form of 'war' (also an onomatopoetic phrase of disrespect) asserting that decay (war, multiplicity) exists even in the grave, which naturally brings us back to the symbol of flesh 'snot' juxtaposed with 'spok' (spook) and 'eno,' carrying us round in a circle to the sick-bed of life (Eno's fruit-salts—also 'He know'—*i.e.* God knows—an echo of a famous line in Omar Khayyam) on to 'fthe' suggesting an explosion of inarticulate wrath, out of which develops the key-word 'soUl,' from which the U protrudes, forcing emphatically upon the reader the necessity of applying the message to himself.

These, of course, are only a few of the inner suggestions of this pregnant poem which saturates with significance what would normally be only a banal and futile statement—*i.e. Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul.*

NOTICE TO AMERICANS

Read Jack Lindsay's book DIONYSOS if you want to know the only authentic path away from Henry Ford, Herbert Hoover, etc. Obviously the sentimental *transition* gang aren't arriving anywhere. Give us the *Atlantic Monthly* for preference, as at least it doesn't pretend to be anything out of the ordinary. But DIONYSOS is the most perfect answer of individual poetic egotism to Democracy and machine civilisation which has yet been made. Unfortunately the price (Two Guineas) puts this book beyond the reach of the English, a down-at-heels and dejected race; but it's not much in Dollars; and in America, where there's still some blood and guts, a philosophy of Dionysos might actually be what you're looking for. (P. R. S.)

EX CATHEDRA

INTO the slimy and stale waters of "post-war" Modernity we have dropped our spoonful of effervescent saline, and thrice the LONDON APHRODITE has arisen from the foam. Behold, She is post-post-war, not at all neurotic, tortured, introspectively disgusted, or christian; but She is Our Lady of Fecundity, and she bans agony.

The Moderns are getting old now. Co-co-corico! They have one foot in the grave and the other on a banana-skin. Earnest fellows, in their heyday they pared life down to its core of rotten mud, and now only the mud is left, rotten. De moribundis nihil . . . except that all the *Criterions, Coteries, Blasts, Damns* and *Dials* are now no more alive than that wonderful old standby, the *London Mercury*. Even *transition* is about as interesting as *Life and Letters*. Sic transit *transition*. It is no longer even funny to watch earnest psychological exhibits who have run away from the U.S. trying in deadly earnest to be ahead of *The Times*.

Ourselves, we are such devotees of the time-cult that we have taken a return ticket backwards into time in order to get ahead of the ghastly modern epoch. Back to the pre-war days, back past the pre-Shaw days, out of the twentieth century back to the humanity of the Renaissance, tootle-oo. Back to Roman insolence to get ahead of modern sneaky impertinence. And back to Greek balanced scepticism to get ahead of modern neurotic hopelessness. Back even to Atlantis to find Beauty in order to put one across Henry Ford, Jazz, Wheels, and the Zeitgeist. And so ta-ta, da-da.

A PROPHECY

Only three more numbers of the LONDON APHRODITE will appear, by which time the Gods will have been sufficiently amused at our efforts to re-humanise mankind. Only three more numbers, then the energies of the atom will be released and the Earth will blow up, so tell all your friends to subscribe.

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

(1) "The LONDON APHRODITE is wonderful." (2) "Fine." (3) "Splendid." (4) "Magnificent." (5) "A tonic." (6) "Cancel my subscription." (7) "Great stuff." (8) "Just what has been wanted to liven things up." (9) "You ought to be shot." (10) "Stick it into 'em, boys!" (11) "I have sent my copy to Jix." (12) "I am eighty years old and have tried Voronoff without success, but this re-birth of poetry has put new life into me." (13) "You are a pair of decadents and ought to be transported to the great open spaces for a cure." (14) "At last something vigorous and healthy has appeared in English literature." etc. etc.